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CITIES AND THE WEALTH OF NATIONS

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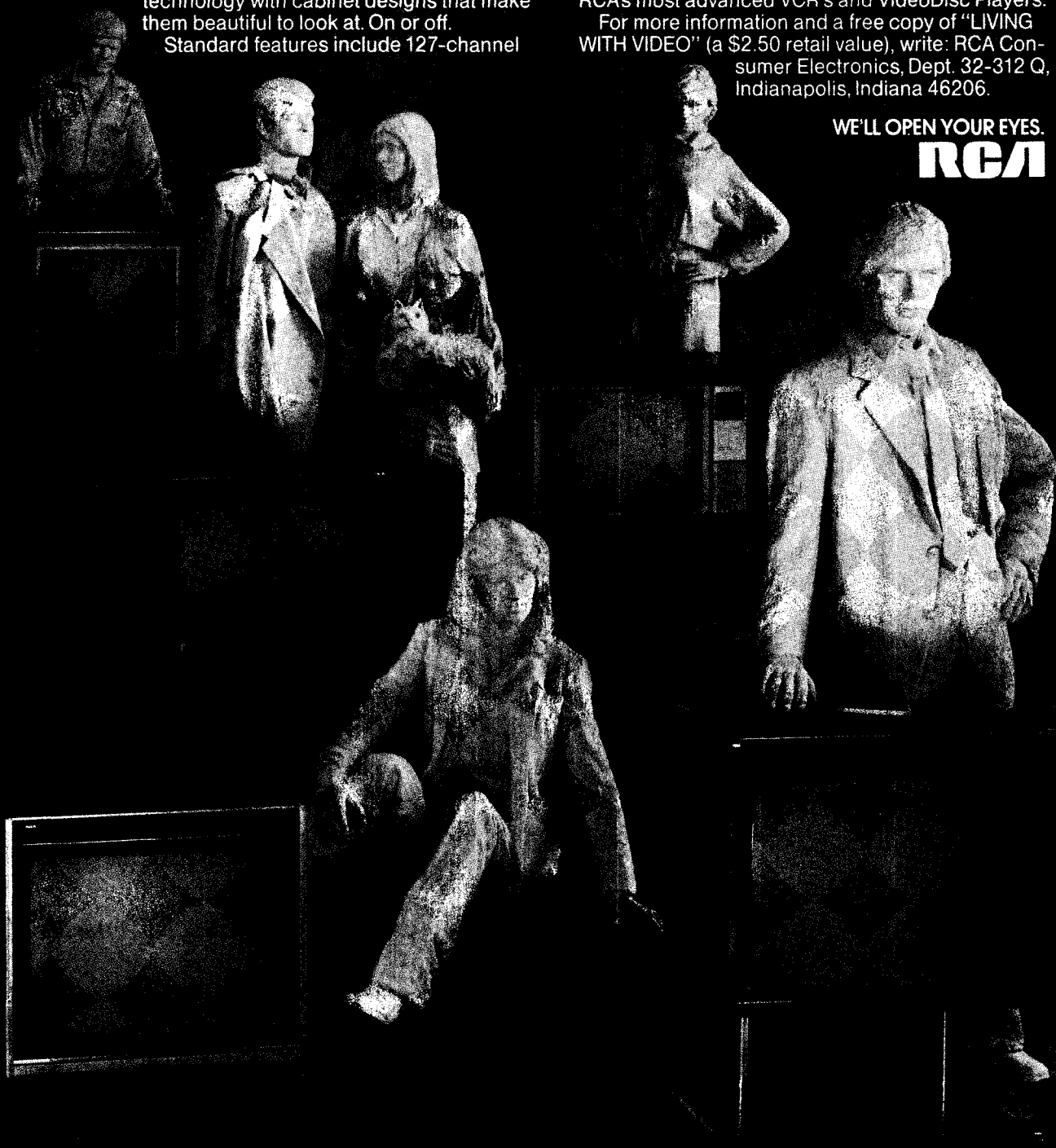
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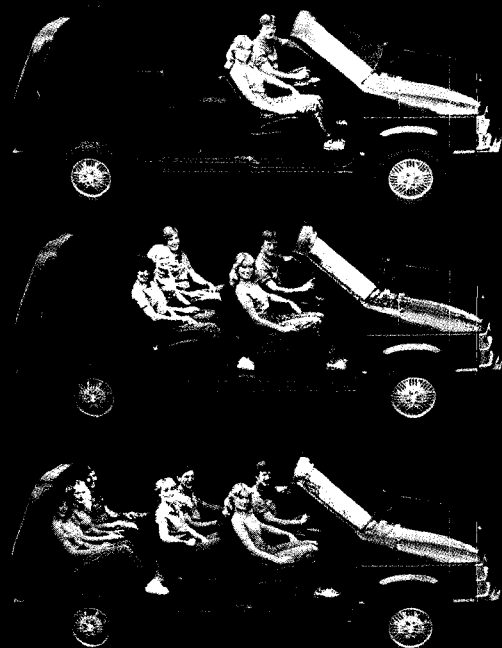


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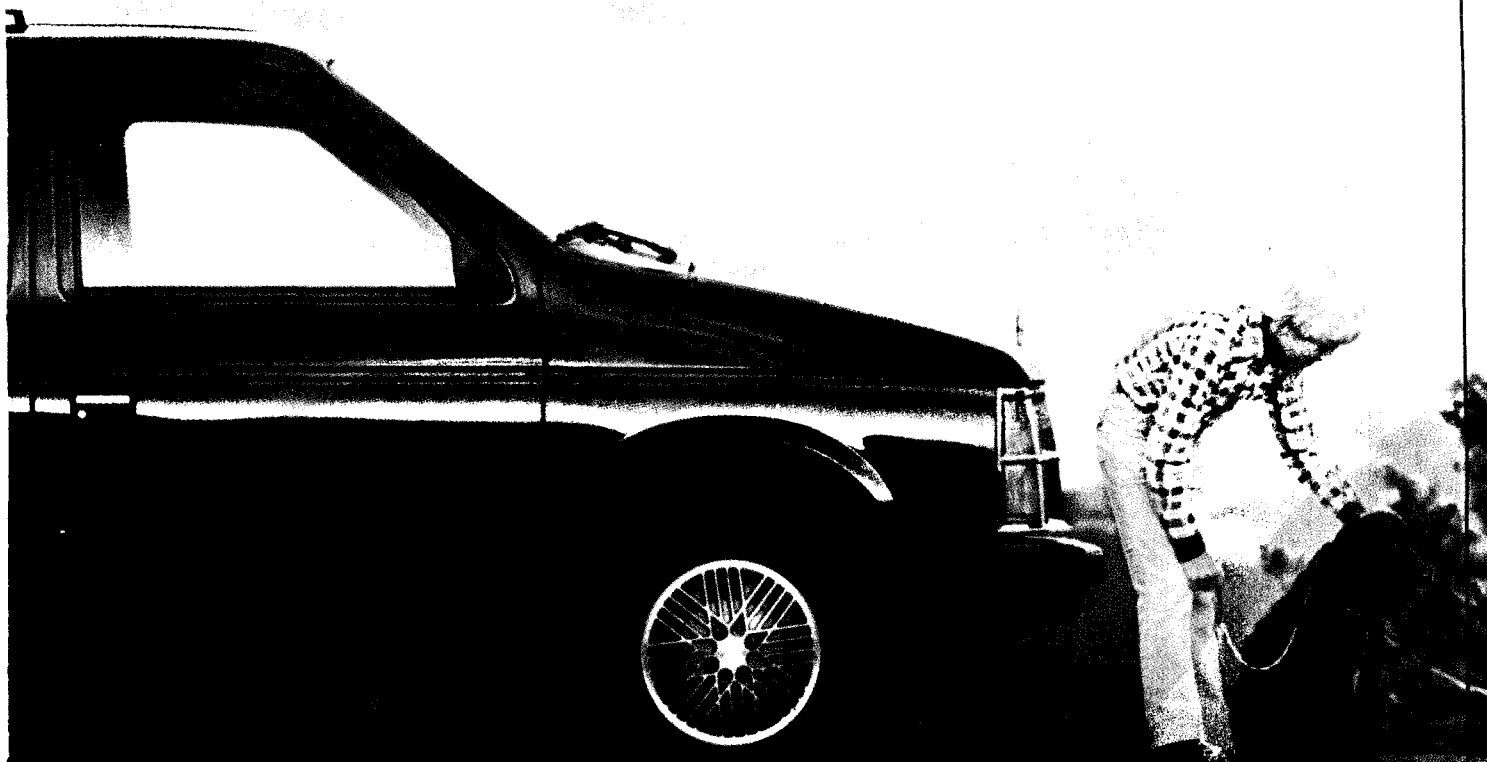
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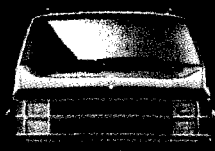


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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

U.S.-SOVIET TENSIONS

Thomas Powers's article (January *Atlantic*) about the nuclear arms race asks, "What is it about?" There is no mystery here: it is about one aspect of the confrontation between democracy and tyranny. The extraordinary, prescient words of Alexis de Tocqueville—quoted in the article—make this very clear. The advent of nuclear weapons has not changed the nature of the confrontation, but it has raised the stakes.

Powers mentions Russian émigrés, but says they have "ample reason to be bitter" and does not consider their testimony further. I think this is a mistake. The émigré is our best chance of probing beyond the Soviet government's party line. During contact with Westerners, any Soviet citizen who is not an émigré or dissident will always support the party line, no matter what he truly feels, fearful that if he does otherwise the KGB will hear about it—through a third party present at the time, such as the interpreter, or a bugging device, or because the Westerner will innocently pass on what was said. (This is so not only in the Soviet Union but also in the West, because groups who travel to the West always include a KGB member or an informer.) Exchanges between Westerners and official Russians are, therefore, predictably barren. The émigré, on the other hand, is not so constrained. When he lived in the Soviet Union he had opportunity for free discussion with friends and associates in circumstances of privacy that the Western visitor almost never has, even if he speaks good Russian. After emigration to the West he is able to talk about the Soviet Union without fear of KGB persecution. Through the émigré we can peek behind the cloak of conformity with which official Russia covers itself.

Galina Orionova, whose story was told in *The Atlantic* (November, 1980), is a case in point. She defected to Britain in 1979 after working for ten years at Georgi Arbatov's Institute for the United States and Canada. Although Thomas Powers deliberates about Arbatov's significance, he reaches no conclusion; Galina Orionova reveals that, in essence,

Arbatov is no more than another mouthpiece of Soviet propaganda: "Though Americans exaggerate the Arbatov Institute's contribution to Soviet foreign policy, they underestimate its role in the propaganda machine. This activity has two functions: 1) the Institute must explain Soviet foreign policy to the Soviet public; 2) it must sell Soviet peace-loving intentions to the Americans." That is a telling quote from the Galina Orionova article. Arbatov's mission is to give Soviet propaganda a gloss of respectability for the benefit of Western academics, intellectuals, and liberals—a not overly difficult task, given their history of uncritical acceptance of almost anything Soviet.

JOCELYN TOMKIN
Austin, Texas

Not in spite of but because of Thomas Powers's great pains to be fair and evenhanded in assessing Soviet intentions and actions, he conveys even more dramatically than a hard-line conservative could that here, indeed, is an intransigent, expansionist power incapable of serious give and take, a power that will refrain from resorting to nuclear blackmail, or worse, only so long as it remains in its best interest to do so.

To be scrupulously fair is one thing, but to suggest, as Powers seems to be doing, that if the United States simply abandoned the whole idea of deterrence the old men of the Politburo might somehow see the light and turn over a new leaf is, in my opinion, the height of folly.

O. M. OSTLUND, JR.
Williamsport, Pa.

CHILD ABUSE

As my work was mentioned twice in Katie Leishman's article "Child Abuse: The Extent of the Harm" (November *Atlantic*), I would like to correct some misunderstandings.

1) When discussing a 1965 survey on which I based an estimate of the scope of child abuse, Ms. Leishman states that the initial interpretation of child abuse was left up to the respondents. This is erroneous, as can be seen from the fol-

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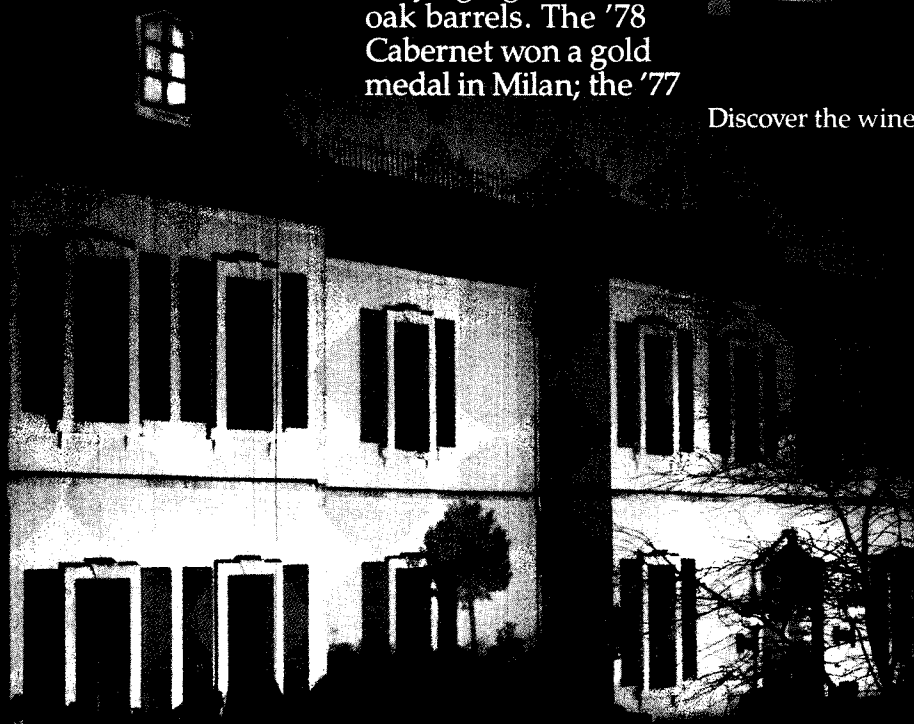
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lowing quotes (from *Violence Against Children*, Harvard University Press, 1970, pp. 55, 58):

To assure fullest possible comprehension of the meaning of this set of questions on the part of respondents the following wording was used:

I will just repeat once more what I mean by child abuse—that is when an adult physically injures a child in his care, either deliberately or because he lost his temper. . . .

The comprehension of respondents of the definition of child abuse as used in the survey was tested in the interview by means of a supplementary questionnaire that required detailed description and actual identification on each child-abuse incident of which they claimed personal knowledge during the preceding year. In this way the attempt was made to ascertain that all incidents reported in response to this question did indeed occur, and fit the definition used in the survey.

2) Ms. Leishman's statement that "women are far more apt to mistreat children" cannot be based on my work. As the following excerpt (*Violence Against Children*, p. 116) reveals, the involvement rate of fathers was actually higher than that of mothers in our studies.

Though in absolute numbers slightly more children in the sample cohort were abused by mothers than by fathers, one must remember that 29.5 percent of the children were living in fatherless homes. Fathers or substitutes were involved as perpetrators in nearly two thirds of the incidents occurring in homes that did have fathers or father substitutes, and mothers or substitutes were involved in slightly fewer than one half the incidents occurring in homes that did have a mother or mother substitute. Thus the involvement rate of fathers was actually higher than that of mothers. It is also noteworthy that about one third of the fathers or substitutes who were involved as perpetrators were not biological fathers but step-fathers.

3) Ms. Leishman's reference to "fifteen reports of malnutrition," which she attributes to me, are unknown to me, and are nowhere mentioned in my writings.

DAVID G. GIL
Professor of Social Policy
Brandeis University
Waltham, Mass.

Katie Leishman asks (over and over again) why doctors don't report child-abuse cases more often. I can tell you why. It's because doctors can be sued, the burden of proof is on the doctor, the cases are typically very hard to prove, and the doctor has a great deal to lose.

HENRY S. WARREN, JR.
Ossining, N.Y.

Katie Leishman, in her perceptive analysis of the current status of child abuse, wonders why parents in child-maltreatment homicides receive suspended or short jail terms when similar offenses against other children or adults would receive much more severe punishment. May I suggest from my studies of criminal child-maltreatment that:

1) Criminal cases are prosecuted on the strength of evidence to convict.

2) Child abuse is infrequently observed by witnesses who can testify in court.

3) The child victim cannot testify and spouses cannot be required to testify against each other.

4) While advances have been made in use of technical evidence such as x-rays, medical testimony, etc., much of this evidence cannot meet the evidence standard for criminal cases, which is "beyond a reasonable doubt."

H. FREDERICK BROWN
Associate Professor
Jane Addams College
of Social Work
Chicago, Ill.

Katie Leishman replies:

I wrote that in Professor Gil's 1965 survey, the initial interpretation of abuse was left up to respondents. Interviewers did tell people that "abuse" meant "when an adult physically injures a child in his care." But the interpretation of physical injury remains entirely subjective. Striking a child for lying may be one person's notion of physical injury, another's of discipline. It was to prevent such ambiguity that sociologist Richard Gelles, when he interviewed parents nationwide, enumerated the acts under consideration—kicking, biting, etc.—in his definition.

The "supplemental questionnaire" Gil describes was given only to those respondents—3 percent of the total—who replied affirmatively to the primary question; this device ensured that the

incidents they reported were consistent with the study's definition of abuse. It did not reveal, however, whether the remaining 97 percent of the respondents included people who knew of incidents precisely like those reported but did not believe those incidents constituted abuse as defined.

Professor Gil inaccurately cites my reference to the apparent relationship between gender and parental violence. I said, "Statistically, it appears that women are far more apt to mistreat children" (emphasis added). I went on to say that this statistical inference might be explained by, among other things, "prejudicial reporting," and in that context mentioned Professor Gil's work. I was aware of his study findings concerning fathers, but did not mention them because his study concerned only physical abuse, and that only as he defined it. In order to obtain a study sample consistent with his definition, he excluded nearly 40 percent of all cases forwarded by central registries nationwide. This limitation makes it too difficult to generalize about the relative abusive tendencies of mothers and fathers.

Finally, Gil writes that fifteen reports of malnutrition attributed to him are "unknown" to him. They are in fact drawn from the second set of data covered in his book *Violence Against Children*.

Mr. Warren is incorrect. Like all mandated reporters, doctors are guaranteed immunity from any civil or criminal lawsuit. (And they need only suspect a case of abuse before reporting it.) A physician loses that immunity only if he or she files a fabricated or clearly malicious report.

The problems Professor Brown mentions are strictly related to the difficulty of obtaining convictions in child-abuse-related homicides. The cases I commented upon were ones in which convictions had already been obtained yet had resulted in remarkably light sentences. The points he raises have nothing to do with sentencing. Two of his observations are erroneous: child victims can and do testify; so do spouses of perpetrators. Because there are typically so few witnesses to child abuse, statutory or case law has everywhere established that the interests of the child outweigh the traditional right of the accused to protection from testimony about "privileged communications" to a spouse. Husbands and wives can be subpoenaed just like anybody else.

DOMESTIC ENERGY

Stripped of its rhetoric, the Lovinses' article ("The Fragility of Domestic Energy," November *Atlantic*) maintains that we should scrap our energy systems because they are vulnerable to disruption. This logic would also lead us to dismantle our drinking-water distribution network, our sewage systems, mass transportation, national communications centers, and even our cities. They are all vulnerable to sabotage and disruption.

A civilized society is indeed "fragile"—particularly a democratic society. But if we become obsessed with its vulnerability, we run the risk of undermining the very liberties that make it democratic and the social structures that make it civilized.

Tens of millions of Americans who live in urban centers—whether in impoverished ghettos or expensive cooperatives—depend on centralized delivery systems: electricity, gas, water, sewage, mass transit, and communications. If we should scrap these in favor of windmills and solar panels, millions of Americans would experience very real damage to their well-being, far greater damage

than they would be likely to suffer from any of the physical "attacks" on our energy system for which the Lovinses offer imaginary scenarios.

RAEL JEAN ISAAC
Irvington, N.Y.

The Lovinses' article is interesting but hardly newsworthy. Essentially all of the points contained in the article appear to be derived from a 1977 U.S. Senate report ("National Energy Transportation Study," #95-15) and from a Federal Emergency Management Agency sponsored study (report #AD-A094-319) published in 1980, which was published again in 1981, in popularized book form, by Clark and Page, as *Energy, Vulnerability, and War*.

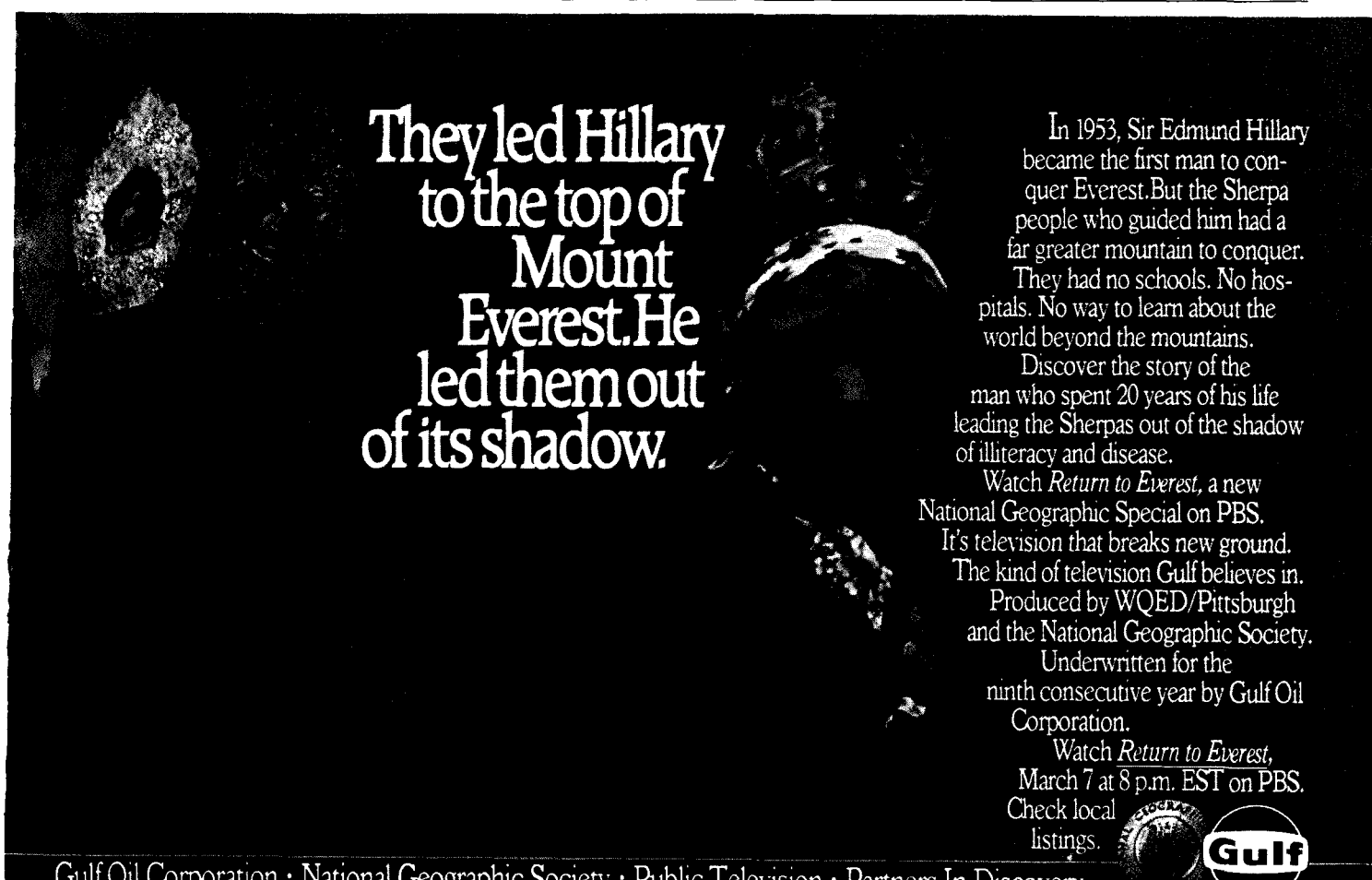
Though the Lovinses are a bit melodramatic, they correctly report earlier identification of certain problems. Unfortunately, the solutions offered, namely the so-called soft technologies (as also suggested in the reports mentioned above), are not necessarily suitable for maintaining or enhancing national security, for at least two reasons:

First, the amount of nonfuel minerals

and materials typically required to construct an active solar-energy system is forty times greater than the minerals and materials needed to construct a fossil-fuel or nuclear-energy system—for the same annual energy output. Wind-energy systems are even more materials-intensive. Because the United States is already heavily dependent on imports for many nonfuel minerals (in part because of environmental opposition to domestic exploration and mining), a push for the soft technologies might further increase nonfuel-mineral-import dependence, and thus jeopardize our national security and further erode our balance of trade.

Second, the soft technologies are not substantially less vulnerable to nuclear war than the conventional, hard technologies. Windmills and solar panels will not withstand much of a blast, and solar panels can be damaged easily just by throwing stones.

The Lovinses, like others, are correct in calling for yet more attention to be paid to ways of improving energy-use efficiency. And the use of dispersed smaller generating stations, as also proposed



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earlier by others, is a good idea. In this regard, the least vulnerable dispersed energy sources would be commercial versions of small reactors, analogous in size to naval reactors. Small, safe reactors could be placed underground, near load centers. With such siting, they could also be used for cogeneration (electricity and district heat), thus saving energy in the spirit of energy conservation instead of burning fuels separately for those purposes as we do today. Ironically, the technology that most fits the formula that the Lovinses and others describe is quite different from that proposed by the soft-path advocates.

DAVID A. FREIWALD
Potomac, Md.

Amory B. Lovins and L. Hunter Lovins
reply:

Ms. Isaac misrepresents us. We said not that today's energy system should be "scrapped" but that informed, economically rational choices could gradually make that system less vulnerable. We therefore called not for panicky central mandate but for reasoned concern. Attacks on energy systems have been documented in more than fifty countries, including our own, and thus our scenarios of sabotage, accidents, and natural disasters are far from "imaginary."

Ms. Isaac supposes that modern urban civilization cannot flourish with a relatively decentralized, renewable energy-supply system. If energy is used cost-effectively, just the opposite is true: urban density often improves solar economics and enables most heat-tight buildings to maintain a comfortable temperature without solar equipment. Since efficiency measures and renewables are cheaper than their competitors, more reliable, and far more accessible to individuals and communities, they make everyone—rich and poor, urban and rural—better off.

Ms. Isaac is right that the nation's non-energy infrastructure is vulnerable too. (We serve on a Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies subcommittee that is exploring this problem for the first time.) In a free society, some vulnerability will remain despite all efforts to make the infrastructure resilient; to that extent the only defense against terrorism is greater social justice.

Mr. Freiwald's sources were cited in the book (Brittle Power) that our article summarized. But our treatment was far

more detailed and comprehensive: of the material that was not wholly original (such as our theoretical analysis of resilience), more than 99 percent was supported by 1,200-odd other citations.

Do renewable energy sources use more materials per unit of energy produced than nonrenewables? Some incompetent early studies showed this—starting from biased accounting and pathological designs. But the renewable sources we considered are in fact less materials-intensive than fossil-fuel or nuclear systems. That is why well-designed renewables cost less, even though they usually require more labor. Renewables also allow a far wider choice of materials. They tend to use common and renewable materials, and very rarely need exotic or imported minerals.

Neither reactors nor solar panels will survive a nuclear exchange. But any lesser event that could disable simple, dispersed, relatively rugged renewable sources would do even more-severe damage to the complex, centralized, delicate nonrenewables—and with far graver consequences. A stone thrown at your solar panel (if it is not glazed with unbreakable plastic) could briefly cool your hot water; but a stone slung at a power-line insulator could black out millions.

Nuclear reactors, shrunk a hundred-fold and built underground in cities (yet, in Freiwald's dream, made "safe" and, presumably, proliferation-proof), meet none of our criteria for technologies: that they should be proven, commercially available, economically competitive, able to supply energy in the form and at the scale that will enable each task to be performed at the lowest cost, sustainable, relatively understandable by their users and accessible to them, and capable of being built in a democracy.

BIOLOGY AND MENTAL ILLNESS

Joseph Alper's article "Biology and Mental Illness" (December *Atlantic*) is an excellent review of the implications of focusing traditional scientific methods upon psychiatric illnesses.

I would, however, like to correct one misconception. Mr. Alper states that CT, or computed tomography, unlike conventional x-rays, produces "pictures [that] are rendered in three dimensions." The only pictures I'm aware of that are three-dimensional are those of hologra-

phy, rendered with lasers. The difference between conventional x-rays and CT is that whereas both produce two-dimensional pictures, the latter does so in a different two-dimensional plane, giving a view of a cross-sectional slice of the brain (or body) rather than a traditional front-to-back or side-to-side view.

By taking a series of such slices (from top to bottom), one can reconstruct a three-dimensional view. At no time, however, does a single three-dimensional picture exist.

LAURENCE A. TURKA, M.D.
New Haven, Conn.

I must take issue with two errors in Joseph Alper's excellent article. The first error is that of minimizing the effectiveness of psychotherapy for most forms of depression. Controlled clinical experiments by Hollon et al. have shown that cognitive-behavioral therapy is as effective as drug therapy for nonpsychotic depressed patients. Nonpsychotic depression is a relatively treatable condition; drugs are often used as an adjunct to psychotherapy rather than the reverse. Alper's failure to clearly distinguish nonpsychotic depression is a serious flaw in an excellent review of the state of knowledge. Alper's second error is in failing to mention clinical social workers, who provide most of the mental-health services in this country.

LINDA L. VERBECK, M.S.W., C.S.W.
Red Bud, Ill.

Joseph Alper replies:

Ms. Verbeck has read more into my article than I intended. First, I was discussing biological depression, which I think she would refer to as psychotic depression. As I pointed out, a major problem in psychiatric research and diagnosis is the way people define mental illness. Depression in the broadest sense of the word affects approximately 10 percent of the U.S. population. Only 2 to 4 percent of the population have what falls into the category of major affective disorder, or biological depression, the subject of the article. (True psychotic depression, as Ms. Verbeck suggests, is extremely rare, and it accounts for no more than one tenth of all biological depression.) Contrary to her claims, no study has shown psychotherapy alone to be effective in treating major affective disorder. The study by Hollon et al. does not qualify as a controlled clinical study, because it has been criticized for

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serious flaws in its design and execution. Currently, the National Institute of Mental Health is funding a three-year clinical study in several locations to compare the results of cognitive-behavioral therapy and drug therapy in treating biological depression. Until that study is completed, anti-depressant drug therapy will be the treatment of first choice.

As for the second point, Ms. Verbeck is right. Clinical social workers do play an important role in treating mental illness in this country. But the main thrust of my article concerned research on the biological roots of mental illness, and to my knowledge very few, if any, clinical social workers are active in this field.

EXECUTING THE ROSENBERGS

Phoebe-Lou Adams concludes her review of *The Rosenberg File* (October *Atlantic*) by saying, "[The trial] was not a frame-up of the Rosenbergs." Fair enough, probably fairer, even, than we have any right to expect. But she adds, "Their execution remains a useless act of barbarism."

Execution is a time-honored treatment for traitors. Its application to the Rosenbergs seems appropriate whether they were merely useful fools or were expressing their savage hatred and contempt for their country and for the human beings who were their fellow citizens.

JOHN F. EVRITT
Speedway, Ind.

Phoebe-Lou Adams replies:

Execution is indeed "a time-honored treatment for traitors," but, as Mr. Evritt's phrase implies, not the only one available. Imprisonment has been known to suffice. The execution of civilian spies had no precedent in this country, and set one that can become dangerous. It is not difficult to imagine circumstances in which disagreement with government policy would be construed as treason. On a practical level, any information the Rosenbergs had about espionage was lost when they died.

FINNED CHEVROLETS

The poem "Twelve" by Rennie McQuilken (January *Atlantic*) con-

tains a glaring inaccuracy. The 1954 Chevrolet did not have fins. The flaw spoiled an otherwise decent poem.

BRUCE NOLL
Volin, S.D.

Rennie McQuilken replies:

Oh, my. May we not allow a lad of twelve to miss by three the Year of the Fin? The faraway fifties are a mystery to him.

RAISING KIDS

James Q. Wilson's suggestion, in "Raising Kids" (October *Atlantic*), that all parents should learn to wield tokens and time-outs with the skill of an experienced psychologist is misguided. Mr. Wilson's article rests largely on the work of Gerald Patterson and therefore presents a biased view of current thinking among family researchers. Wilson cites only Dr. Patterson's supporters and none of his critics.

Patterson's hypothesis—parents who raise monsters are inept in the appropriate use of rewards and punishments—is an appealingly straightforward notion, but research findings do not support it. Patterson's own published observations show that families with problem children are very similar to those with well-behaved children both in the percent of good behavior they encourage and in the proportion of annoying events they correct. In addition, when parents scold their children for misbehavior, the deviant children are just as likely as their normal peers to stop. The only distinguishing characteristic of a family with an out-of-control child is that the child yells, hits, and refuses to obey much more frequently than other children.

Pragmatically speaking, treatment through the use of a token reward system and isolation has not been a universal cure for family disharmony. Other investigators have consistently failed to obtain the dramatic effects reported by Dr. Patterson. Martha Bernal, for example, found that children treated at the University of Denver using Patterson's approach made no more progress than did those whose mothers and fathers were given the opportunity to participate in a supportive parents' group. One reason Patterson's results showed such marked improvement was that many difficult-to-treat families dropped out of the program, leaving a select group of suc-

cesses to bolster the appearance of effectiveness. Mr. Wilson was correct in stressing the difficulty of obtaining the cooperation of the parents in implementing a token system.

While the Patterson approach is effective for some troubled families, it is not appropriate for well-functioning children. The child-development literature consistently finds that parental characteristics such as warmth, flexibility, willingness to reason with the child, and the tendency to avoid punishment are associated with the development of competent, mature, and psychologically healthy children. Patterson does not teach skills that foster these characteristics.

Recent work in my laboratory indicates that parents with out-of-control children who first improved their relationships with their children were more successful in changing their children's behavior than were those treated by therapists trained by Gerald Patterson's staff and employing his techniques. I believe we obtained these results because we were able to teach parents and children new ways to relate to one another, ways that were both positive and mutually rewarding, and which ultimately strengthened the emotional bond between parent and child.

Child tyrants are created not because adults fail to dole out tokens but because their approval or disapproval is not important to the child. With all but the youngest or the most severely disturbed, it is the child's love of and respect for the parent that molds his or her behavior to conform to the adult's values. Coercive measures like tokens and time-outs are stopgap measures for use with families who do not yet have a foundation of mutual respect and trust. They are not the child-rearing methods of choice for healthy families. A far more meaningful goal for parent education is to teach parents how to form deep and lasting relationships with their children.

ELIZABETH A. ROBINSON
Assistant Professor of Psychology
University of Washington
Seattle, Wash.

James Q. Wilson replies:

Professor Robinson correctly suggests that parental love and warmth are important to the raising of decent children and then speculates—I think erroneously—that providing that warmth to children who are out of control will restore

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them to well-being. She suggests that her own research proves this, but to the best of my knowledge these studies have not been published and thus her claims cannot be evaluated. Gerald Patterson's research has been published, and, contrary to what she says, it provides strong support for the view that the parents of out-of-control children are often inept in the use of rewards and punishments (I refer her to Tables 6.4, 6.7, and 6.8 in his book *Coercive Family Process*). She is quite right to note—as I noted in my article—that some other therapists have been unable to duplicate Patterson's success. But she fails to refer to either my discussion or his of why this has been the case: namely, that these other programs used student therapists and relatively brief courses of therapy.

Retraining parents is very difficult, costly, and time-consuming; these are but some of the reasons why it is not and cannot be a cure-all for every family in distress. The essential point that Professor Robinson and many other critics miss is that there is a world of difference between saying that love is a necessary condition for raising decent children and saying that it is a sufficient condition.

DECLINE OF GRAMMAR

Geoffrey Nunberg's "The Decline of Grammar" is splendid; so are the illustrations by Michael C. Witte. Mr. Nunberg is a giant in his field, but I wish he were not so tolerant. There is hard evidence for a "general linguistic degeneration." Most of it we ignore, or try to, but what are we to conclude when the admiral in charge of the Grenada operation is quoted as saying "We were not micro-managing Grenada intelligencewise during that particular time frame"? We know what he means, but doesn't his inflated language say something about his thought as well as his subject?

JACK ARBOLINO
New York, N.Y.

Safire, Simon, Newman, et al. typically ignore distinctions in contexts. For example, Newman, in *A Civil Tongue*, disapproves of Mickey Lolich's commenting "I still pitch good" (the Detroit Tigers great was thirty-five and had just been traded to the Mets). Lumping spontaneous oral solecisms in the same

category with edited and proofed ones is akin to creating an Inferno with only one circle. Imagine Dante making neighbors of Judas and Virgil!

JOHN HERSHEY
Lansing, Mich.

Geoffrey Nunberg replies:

The admiral's remarks appear to fall in the great tradition of military obscurantism. In 1711, Addison wrote, "Our Soldiers are Men of strong Heads for Action, and perform such Feats as they are not able to express. . . . They ought to be provided with Secretaries, and assisted by our Foreign Ministers, to tell their Story for them in plain English, and to let us know in our Mother-Tongue what it is our brave Countrymen are about."

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF MILK

Re "The Political Economy of Milk," by John Donahue (October *Atlantic*):

1) He asserts that milk prices are high, but offers no quantitative backup for that judgment. Against his assertion must be weighed the fact that dairy products, like all food, have taken a steadily decreasing percentage of spendable income (in 1950, food spending was 25 percent; now it's about 16) and require fewer minutes-of-work-to-buy than ever before. Agricultural experts agree that the real cost of producing a hundred-weight of milk is about \$16, while the present price is about \$13. A recent ELFAC study documents that farm income is sufficient to cover either return on investment to the operator or a minimum wage, but not both.

2) He asserts that supports have had the result of raising prices, but conspicuously neglects to mention a recent University of Minnesota study that documents just the opposite. Donahue chooses to ignore the fact that a guaranteed price has the acknowledged effect of encouraging excess production. Likewise, he ignores the fact that the support program's original purpose was to keep marginal dairymen in business, thereby assuring urbanites like him a reliable low-cost milk supply.

3) He asserts that supports have cost consumers more, but fails to acknowledge that on those occasions when market conditions took the "natural" price above support levels, the government

stepped in to drive prices back down again (that has been conceded by the USDA). His comment that the market power of cooperatives enables them to "demand more" indicates that he doesn't approve of supports being unnecessary any more than he approves of their being necessary.

MARTIN S. HARRIS, JR.
Waltham, Vt.

Re John Donahue's article on the political economy of milk:

—Milk price supports of \$2.8 billion equal three cents per day per capita, or \$11.76 per year. (That is the bill prior to the \$1/hundredweight assessment that dairy farmers are now paying to decrease that sum.)

—Retail prices for dairy products have not risen relative to price increases for other consumer goods and services.

—The result of eliminating the dairy programs and marketing infrastructure would be a temporary decrease in retail prices followed by a dramatic increase due to uncertain supplies, not to mention the cost of unemployment and its related problems.

—Agriculture accounts for 23 percent of the U.S. work force.

—Agricultural productivity has increased 4 percent per year compared with .7 percent for nonagricultural productivity, the result of which is increased revenue across the board of society's strata, for agriculture is not an economic island.

—American consumers spend a smaller portion of every dollar earned for food than consumers anywhere else in the world, precisely because of government-support programs. The support programs were established to provide consumers with a steady supply of low-priced, high-quality food and fiber as well as to protect producers from devastating swings in the so-called "free-enterprise" system of marketing.

—In the United States economy, there are few, if any, individuals who can claim they benefit in no way from any sort of government "subsidy," be it in the form of a tax shelter, student-loan rates, or the "cheap-food policy" that has prevailed.

—The cost of hunger is much greater indeed than the cost of a milk surplus.

Proposals to balance the supply of milk with the demand must consider political and economic reality, not fantasy. To suggest that existing programs and related legislation should be abolished is

akin to suggesting that the U.S. government should disappear into the woodwork and allow every citizen to fend for himself.

ROBIN FITCH
Calais, Vt.

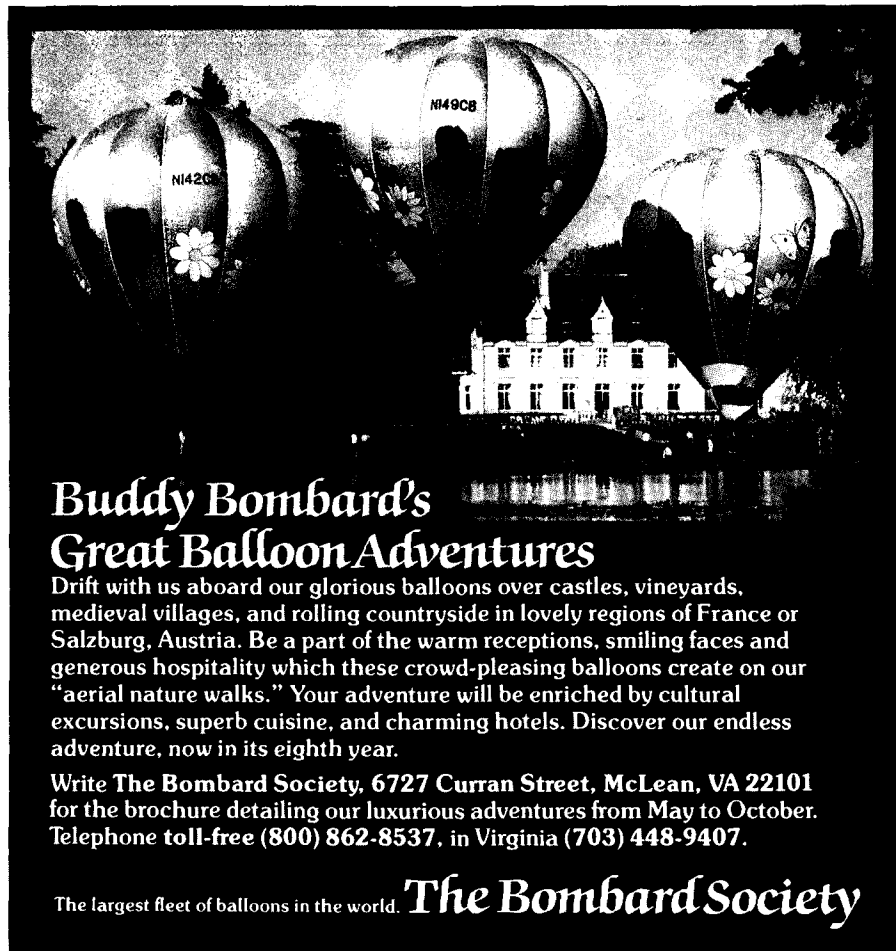
John Donahue replies:

Milk prices are higher on average than they would be without price supports. Logic suggests it. History demonstrates it. If Mr. Harris were to examine prices in countries without support-purchase policies, he would find they are lower. He might also ask himself whether the dairymen he knows are stupid enough to spend time and money lobbying for a policy that cuts their incomes. (He might also ask himself how long it would take them to pick another line of work if they were consistently losing money on every gallon, as he claims they are.) The two points he says I "choose to ignore"—the original goals for dairy policy and its bias toward overproduction—are supposed to be central themes in the article. Something is wrong with either my writing or his reading.

We do indeed, as both Mr. Harris and Mrs. Fitch point out, spend a smaller fraction of our money on milk and other food than we used to, but that applies to most basic goods. We're a richer society, at least in material terms, than we were thirty years ago. Holding relative prices sacrosanct is a good way to reverse that trend. (Besides, milk-pricing regulations date from the 1930s, so there's no reason to have expected sharp price increases in the past few decades.)

Mrs. Fitch's observation on the ubiquity of subsidies is unassailable but not very relevant. (The farm-employment number she cites, though, is roughly ten times too high.) Her comment on the costs of hunger is more pertinent, but I wonder why she objects to the prospect of reduced price supports, which would make milk more affordable.

Mrs. Fitch, Mr. Harris, and a number of other correspondents suspect that my critique of dairy policy must spring from a deep hostility to government or farmers or both. It doesn't. It is not a bit inconsistent to harbor high hopes for the public sector, to respect and admire America's farmers, and still to think it's a bad idea—wasteful and unfair and a terrible precedent—for the federal government to hoard butter and cheese in order to drive up milk prices.



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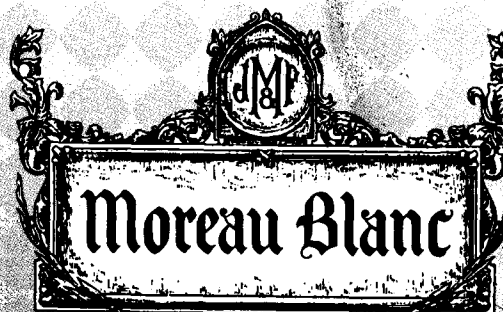
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REPORTS & COMMENT

MEDICINE WHEN WE ARE OLD

*Research on animals
is suggesting ways to delay
senescence in human beings by
twenty years or more*

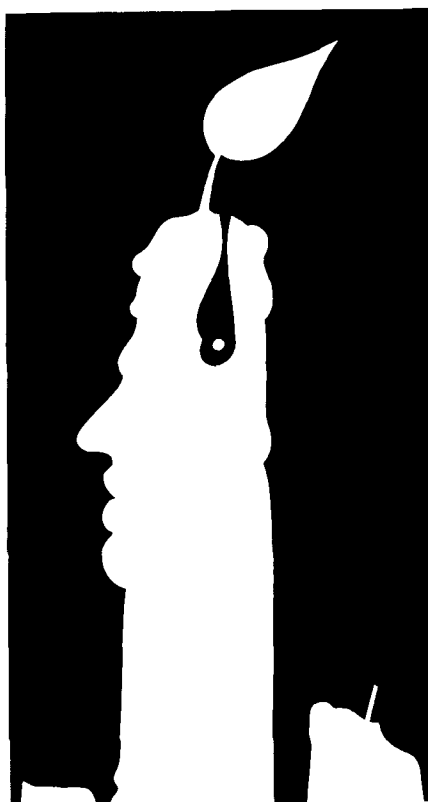


OVER THE PAST thirty years, research on aging has raised the serious possibility that life expectancy might someday be extended by as much as one fourth. Many different lines of research—on diet, metabolism, and the immune system, among other things—are being pursued. One of the most promising of these originated with Denham Harman, professor of medicine and biochemistry at the University of Nebraska, who proposed, in 1954, that the highly reactive molecular fragments known as “free radicals,” which are especially damaging to biological microstructures, might to some extent be counteracted by the increased consumption of antioxidants. These chemical compounds, of which vitamin E is the best known, occur naturally in some foods and are added as preservatives to others—in most countries in tiny and strictly regulated proportions.

Harman and many others are of the opinion that, just as small amounts of antioxidants preserve foods, in larger amounts the compounds might preserve human tissue. Many antioxidants have since been tested for such an effect on laboratory animals, and the increased longevity observed was equivalent, in Harman's reckoning, to an extension of

the average human life expectancy from seventy-three to ninety-five years.

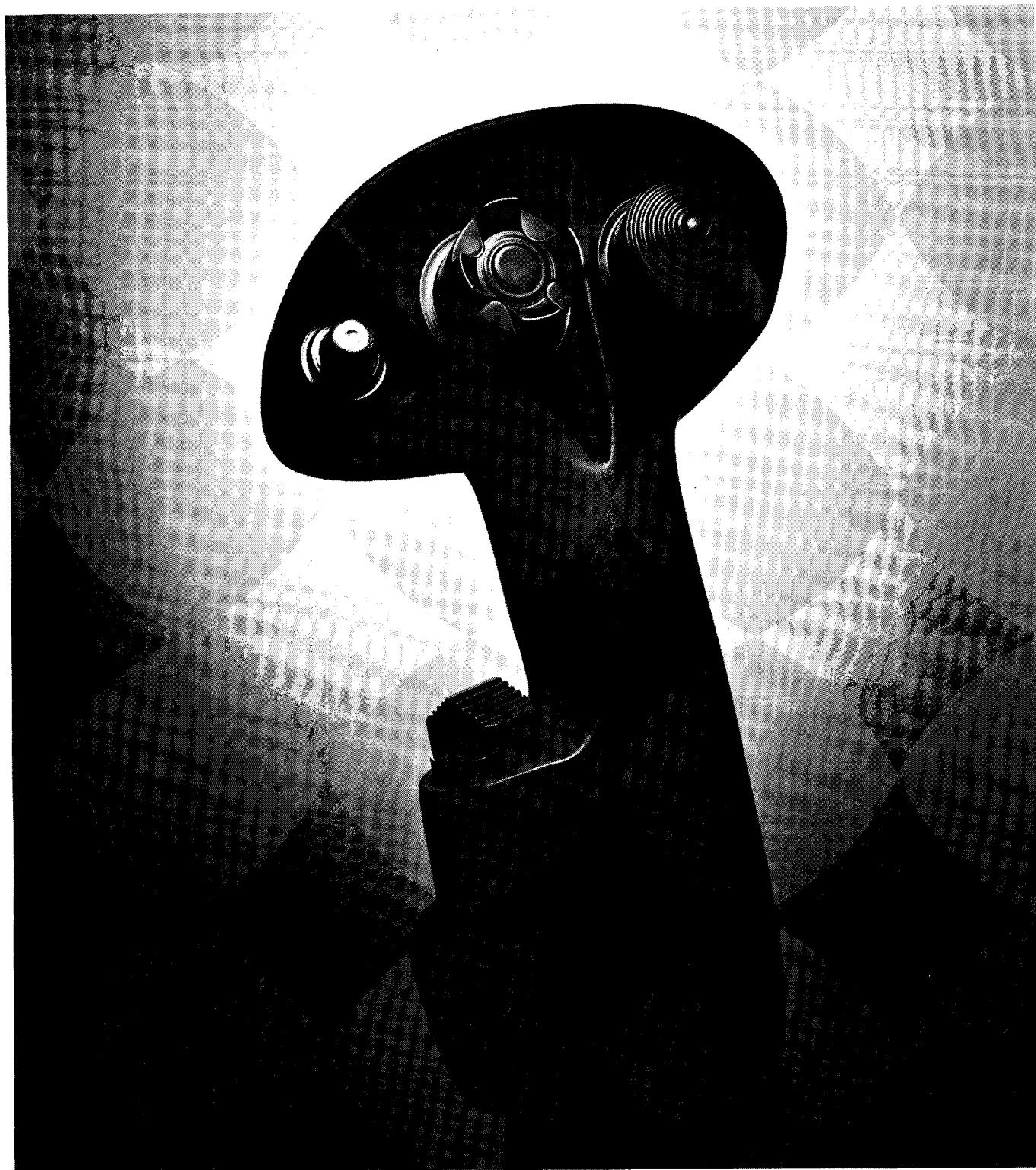
If antioxidants can be ingested safely by human beings, the result is not expected to be an extra decade or two of zombie-like existence, in which people would be alive only in the purely technical sense (or alive enough, shall we say, to avoid becoming transplant donors). Not at all. What the researchers hope for is a prolonging of life such as would be achieved if the seven ages of man were marked off on a length of rubber and the rubber were stretched. A seventy-year-old would have the address to life of a sixty-year-old, and an eighty-year-old that of a seventy-year-old.



How successful any treatment to prolong life might be is unclear. Growing old is a bad thing quite apart from the decline of bodily faculties and energies that it entails. Even if the process of senescence could be arrested temporarily, we would still suffer from the passage of years. Consider, for example, the likely consequences of extending a woman's reproductive life to the age of sixty, or beyond. The older a woman is at the age of reproduction, the longer her finite endowment of egg cells will have been exposed to influences that are inimical to it. Thus, even though a woman of sixty might be as physically fit as a woman of thirty, the likelihood of a chromosomal aberration, such as that which causes Down's syndrome, would have increased with her age. The etiology of cancer is a similar example. Researchers believe that a malignant tumor can start with the mutation of a chromosome following the body's exposure to ionizing radiation, a toxic chemical, or some other mutagen. Thus, the longer one lives, the longer one has to cross the path of such hazards, and the greater one's chances of contracting cancer.

Because it is not easy to see a remedy for these side effects of old age, I fear that the incorporation of antioxidants into our diet will have a more modest result than proponents of the theory expect. But there are people who say that such research ought not to proceed at all. Their opposition compels us to ask, Is the extension of the life-span a possibility that we should welcome or a temptation that we should resist?

THE CASE AGAINST efforts to increase longevity takes several forms. It is said, for example, that the prolonging of life runs counter to biblical teaching. Yet



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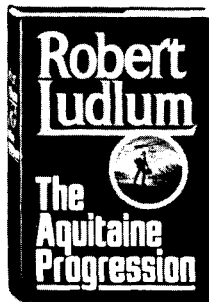
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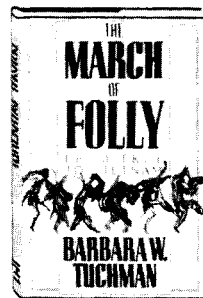
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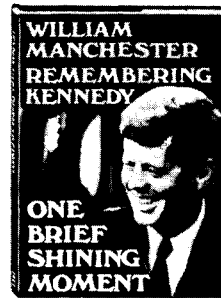
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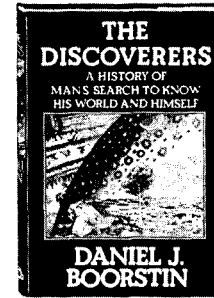
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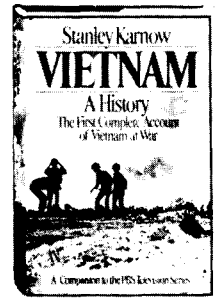
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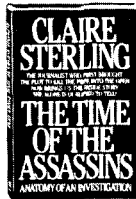
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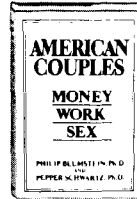
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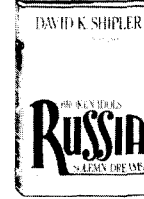
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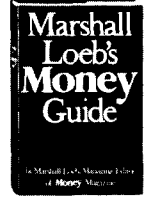
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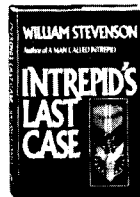
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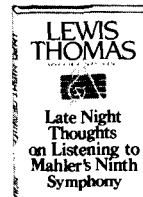
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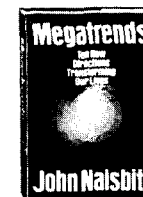
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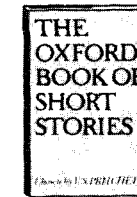
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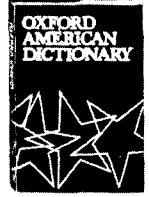
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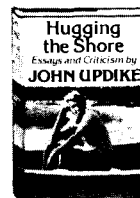
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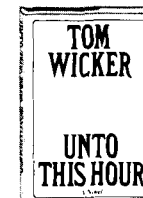
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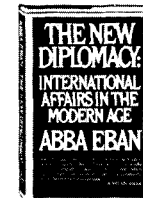
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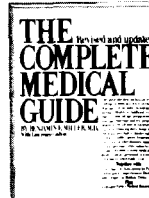
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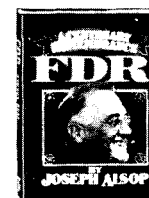
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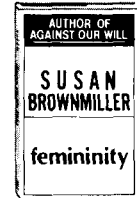
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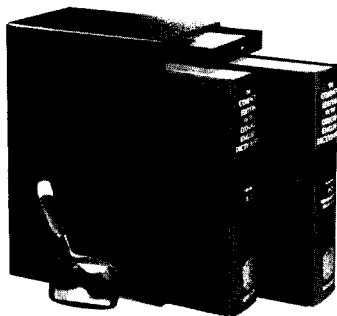
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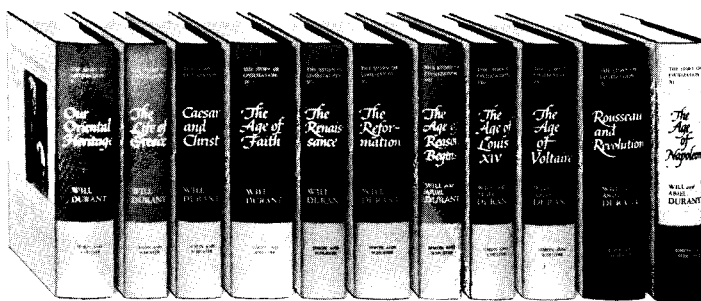
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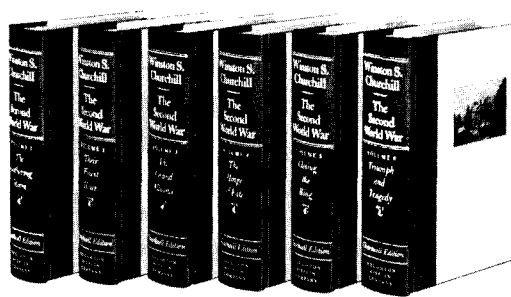
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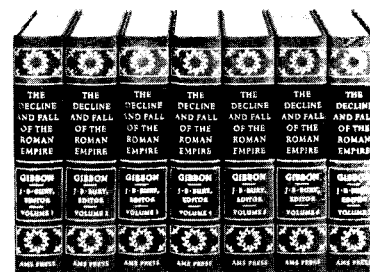
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"threescore years and ten" (*Psalms* 90:10) has no authority other than the opinion of a psalmist. In fact, the phrase is something of a cliché in the Bible, standing for quite a number but less than a hundred. Thus we are told that there were threescore and ten palm trees in Elim (*Numbers* 33:9); that when the house of Jacob entered Egypt, it comprised threescore and ten persons (*Deuteronomy* 10:22); that Jerubbaal had threescore and ten sons (*Judges* 9:2). It might be more in accord with the spirit of the Bible if the human life-span were construed to be that which, for better or worse, human beings cause it to be.

People also say that extending life is a crime against nature. I consider this a despondent view, which rests on an implicit nostalgia for the supposedly healthy, happy, exuberant, and yea-saying savages that Jean-Jacques Rousseau spoke for—creatures whose life expectancy probably did not exceed twenty-five or thirty years. This attitude echoes the literary propaganda of the Romantic revival, and it is surely wider of the mark than Thomas Hobbes's assertion that the life of man in a state of nature is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

Human life has always been what human beings have made of it, and in many ways we have improved on nature. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that all advances in medicine increase life expectancy; their efficacy is measured by the degree to which they do so. I am referring not only to insulin, penicillin, and the other spectacular innovations of medical history but also to aspirin (which lowers fever and reduces inflammation, besides relieving pain), adhesive bandages, and washing one's hands before eating. These, too, have contributed years to our life-span.

The whole philosophy of the prevention of disease—and where prevention fails, the cure—represents a deep and long-standing moral commitment to life, and the research in question here is its logical development. Thus, one could argue that, our commitment to the preservation of life having already been made, it is too late for us to cease to be ambitious.

Other objections to prolonging old age have to do with population control and age distribution. For example, it is asked, Dare we propose to add to a burden that is almost insupportable now?

Shall the resources of underprivileged nations be consumed at an even faster rate by the technologically more advanced peoples of the Northern Hemisphere and of the West generally—those who will be the first to take advantage of new medical procedures?

In partial extenuation, it can be said that the increase in population would not be exponential, because it is unlikely that older people would choose to add to their families. Admittedly, though, they would have mouths, and they would use energy and other raw materials at the high rate characteristic of people in the developed parts of the world.

One hears that the likely increase in population size would provoke wars, as if the linkage were an established truth. But it does not stand up to scrutiny. No one will challenge Europe's claim to the dunce's cap for political aggression and warmaking, yet war has been no more frequent in Europe over the past hundred years than it was in medieval times or in the fifteenth century or in the seventeenth, even though the population has grown steadily.

The threat of gerontocracy—government by the aged and probably for the aged—is less easy to dismiss. Certainly old people require special attention, and their rising numbers would lay an extra burden on social-welfare services in a caring society. That burden would have to be shouldered mainly by the young. A vigorous elderly generation would also probably hold on to jobs that otherwise would pass to the young, thereby exacerbating unemployment. Who knows? A gerontocracy might have the nerve to impose a special tax on jobholders below some minimum age, and at the same time reward older jobholders with generous concessions.

Without minimizing these last worries, I must point out that the political and sociological effects of a population shift would not be felt overnight. We should have between fifty and 200 years to adapt.

The process might completely overturn our present ideas about work and retirement, but in reality such a revolution has been in progress for the past 150 years, as the proportion of older people in the population has grown with advances in medicine and sanitary engineering. It is reasonable to assume we can solve the problems of the future, since they are not qualitatively new.

JANE AUSTEN WROTE her novels around the turn of the nineteenth century, and they are a mine of information about the manners and attitudes of her day. Consider, in particular, Austen's first published novel, *Sense and Sensibility*. The hero, Colonel Brandon, is rated at thirty-five an old man and quite past it—so much so that Marianne Dashwood, the eighteen-year-old girl whose hand he seeks, regards his suit as a kind of geriatric charade. In the book the question arises of laying down a sum to purchase a fifteen-year annuity for Marianne's mother, who is described as a healthy woman of forty. The man who would have to provide for the annuity protests, "Her life cannot be worth half that purchase." So Austen seems able to take for granted her readers' doubt that a woman of forty could live to be as old as fifty-five.

Suppose someone had told Austen's contemporaries that their life expectancy could be doubled. If they were to react as some people do today, they would have held up their hands in horror at the impiety of interfering with nature—at the very idea that a man of thirty-five would not have one foot in the grave and that a woman of forty would live another fifteen years! Yet the average life-span of a century or more ago seems pathetically short from the perspective of today. How can we be certain that a generation as close to us as we are to Jane Austen would not look upon our fears with pained condescension?

Some lines by the poet Walter Savage Landor, which have the cadences of a requiem, seem to rebuke the wish to delay death:

Nature I loved; and next to Nature,
Art.

I warmed both hands before the
fire of life;

It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Perhaps this declaration is a Christian acquiescence to an inevitable fate, but to me it sounds spiritless. A person who is loved and in good health has reason enough to want to live a few years longer than might seem to be his due: to learn, for example, how the grandchildren turn out, and whether the flux of history corroborates or refutes his expectations. A writer will want to complete his book, or even turn his thoughts to another, and no gardener will willingly surrender his hope of taking part in the wonder and

joyous expectations of another spring. From the point of view of biology, the strength of our hold upon life has been the most important single factor in bringing us to our present ages and, indeed, in the fact that human beings have evolved at all.

Some of the evils that confront mankind—the havoc of war, for example—can be anticipated and guarded against. Others are more insidious. They are the outcomes of well-intentioned actions and could not have been predicted. I have in mind the deaths from cancer of the pioneers of x-radiography, who could not possibly have known that x-rays are among the most potent cancer-causing agents.

Likewise, overpopulation is the consequence of a reduction of mortality, especially in childhood, through medicine and sanitary engineering, which has not been matched by a corresponding reduction in the birthrate.

All else being equal, I think that the risk of unforeseeable catastrophe will probably be sufficient to turn us away from the research to extend life. But what I *hope* will happen is this: perhaps a dozen enthusiasts for the prolonging of life will go ahead and try to prolong their own lives. If they become wise and oracular nonagenarians or centenarians, they will be counted among the benefactors and pathfinders of mankind. If senile dementia is their fate, they will have warned us off, and that would be an equally useful service.

My personal sympathies are with the daredevils who want to try out these new procedures. This kind of adventurousness has always been in the character of science, as Sir Francis Bacon, the Lord Chancellor of England, the first and greatest philosopher of science, and a pious and reverent man, believed. In one of his essays, he wrote:

The true aim of science is the discovery of all operations and all possibilities of operations from immortality (if it were possible) to the meanest mechanical practice.

I count Bacon, therefore, as a man on my side.

—Sir Peter Medawar

Sir Peter Medawar won the Nobel Prize for Medicine and Physiology in 1960. He is currently a member of the scientific staff of the Medical Research Council, in Harrow, England.

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BRAZIL FAMINE IN THE BACKLANDS

The government's efforts to relieve a drought affecting millions in the northeastern section of the country have been inadequate



FOUR MORNINGS A week, after a twelve-hour journey across the parched interior of Brazil's state of Ceará, the aging diesel train SA-2 pulls into João Filipe Station, in the heart of Fortaleza, the state capital. Hundreds of bedraggled passengers spill onto the crowded platform and move slowly toward the exits. They are a pitiful group, for the most part—old people with skin like parchment, gaunt young couples surrounded by five or six children, youngsters leading blind parents by the arm. These ragged, impoverished newcomers are “*flagelados*,” or “scourged ones,” fugitives from the latest drought afflicting the backlands of northeastern Brazil.

It is estimated that more than 2 million people, most of them penniless and many on the verge of starvation, have flocked to the larger cities in the interior or along the coast over the past five years. In the past year, more than 300,000 *flagelados* have descended, often after journeys of incredible hardship, on Fortaleza alone, a city of 1.3 million. Many families travel for several days,

standing crammed like cattle in the back of large open trucks; most make the journey entirely on foot, often walking a hundred miles or more under a merciless sun. Those who arrive on train SA-2 aren't much better off. SA-2, which originates 275 miles southwest of the city, is widely known as the Train of Misery, because it always pulls into the station with passengers who are sick and starving, and it sometimes pulls in with the bodies of those who have died of hunger en route.

The terrain of northeastern Brazil can be roughly divided into three regions: the narrow coastal strip, which supports sugar-cane plantations; then, moving inland, the *agreste*, a semifertile swath of subsistence farms; and finally, the *sertão*, or backlands, a semi-arid, dirt-poor region that covers two thirds of the Northeast and is as big as France and Spain combined, and that is used mainly for raising cattle. Life has always been difficult in the Northeast, a region that were it a separate nation would rank second in population and third in area in all of South America. It is the biggest pocket of poverty in the Western Hemisphere, a land of deep-rooted superstition and unrelenting blood feuds. (Military police still guard the road leading into and out of Exu, a cattle-raising town in the *sertão*, where a vendetta among three families has taken at least thirty-eight lives in thirty-four years.) Life expectancy in the Northeast is only 54 years (it is 74.5 in the United States), but in the parched backlands it is even lower.

Droughts have visited suffering on the

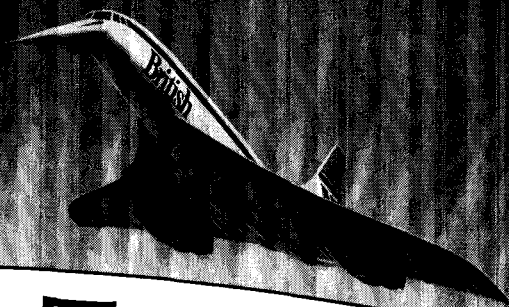
backlands for several centuries, but the current one is the worst in more than a hundred years. Not a drop of rain has fallen in five years over large parts of the *sertão*, and government meteorologists predict that the drought will not end before late 1985. In times past, droughts have mostly afflicted the backlands, but this one is taking over the *agreste* and in some places, such as in the area around Fortaleza, moving right up to the sea. In 1979, according to official figures, the drought covered 32 percent of the Northeast, affecting 9 million people; now, it spreads over 87 percent of the region, home to 24 million (almost 70 percent of the Northeast's total population of 34 million). The livelihoods of 10 million of these people have been affected directly.

Throughout that enormous expanse, crops have withered, rivers have dried up, and livestock has perished. The birds, small animals, and reptiles that managed to elude the starving *flagelados* have long since fled. As in scenes from a Grade B western, dried carcasses and bleached bones litter the sides of roads, and the horses and cattle that have somehow survived are little more than walking skeletons. The exodus of human beings from tenant farms, ranches, and villages has left much of the *sertão* abandoned, a barren waste of cactus, spiny xerophytic scrub, and trees that have shrunk to the size of shrubs in order to survive.

The dislocations caused by the drought are greatly straining local and state governments. Some migrants, most of whom are a racial mixture of white, black, and Indian, are met at the bus and train stations by state officials and offered passage back home, along with a guarantee that the heads of households will be placed on the eligibility list for jobs rebuilding wells, dams, and aqueducts. “But not many accept the return ticket,” a discouraged middle-level administrator of the program told me recently, “and some who did came back a few weeks later. They know there isn't any work here, and they'll have to beg for food and water, but where they come from there isn't any food or water at any price.”

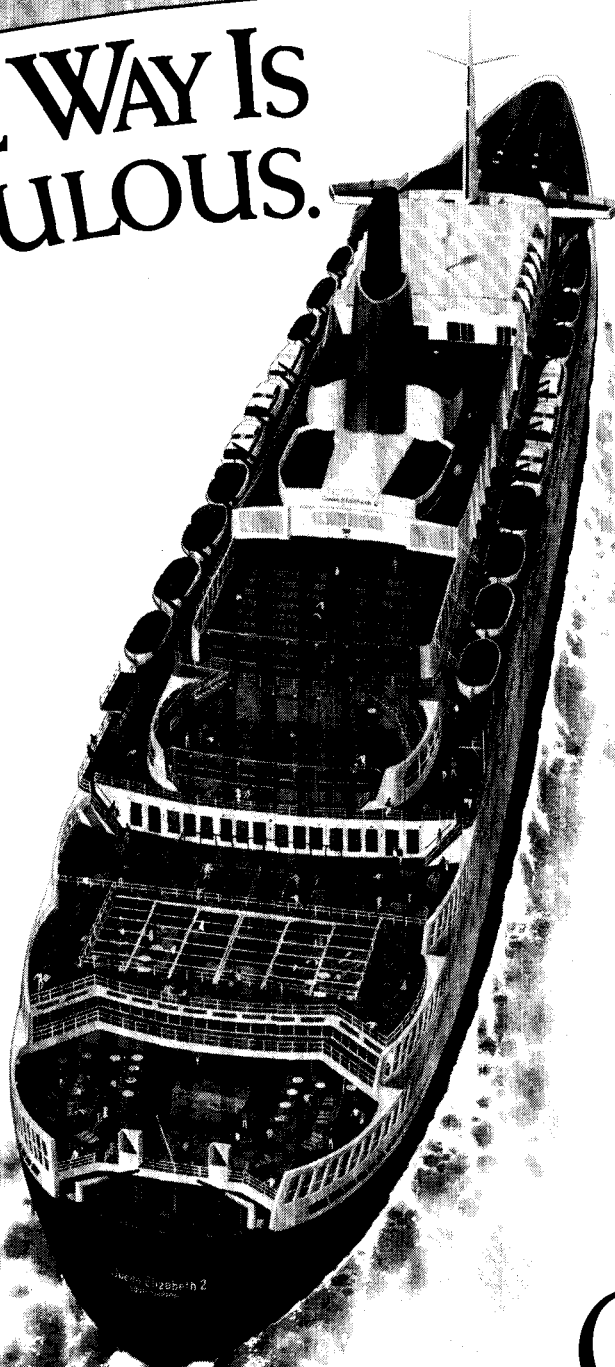
The influx of backlanders into Fortaleza, equivalent to the sudden arrival of more than 2 million refugees in New York City, has resulted in chaos. The area around the train station, the João Tome bus station, and the cathedral is

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overrun with beggars, cripples, and families that huddle at night on dirty sidewalks. Slums have sprung up on the fringes of the city, barely pubescent girls have turned to prostitution, and crime—particularly the theft of anything that can be sold or bartered for food—has increased.

Similar chaos has engulfed Recife, a city of almost 1.5 million people 500 miles down the coast, and the capital of the state of Pernambuco. Most of the rivers and streams that run through this so-called Venice of South America have turned to mud, and water has been rationed since last summer. To make matters worse, officials say, it may be another year before it is safe to eat fish from coastal waters, because sugar-cane distilleries in the area have discharged millions of cubic feet of poisonous residues into the rivers.

HEALTH OFFICIALS ESTIMATE that the drought will kill 250,000 people; most of the victims will be children, among whom it has already taken a terrible toll. Eighty percent of the children buried in recent months at Parangaba, a cemetery less than five miles from the center of Fortaleza, died of hunger or related diseases. Roads throughout the backlands are scarred with rough-hewn crosses marking the graves of many drought victims. Along a stretch of unpaved road between Euclides da Cunha and Tucano, towns in the sparsely inhabited heart of the *sertão*, three small crosses mark where half the children from one family died after stopping for the night during their walk to Salvador, capital of the state of Bahia, 175 miles to the southeast. Parish priests throughout the backlands, many of whom have conducted special masses at which the faithful pray for rain, confide that large numbers of children lie in unmarked graves because their parents could not afford the fifty cents necessary to register their deaths.

Children trudging with their parents along the "Cotton Highway" and BR-020, two of the major roads across Ceará to Fortaleza, exhibit the distended stomachs and vacant eyes caused by chronic hunger. The Albert Sabin Children's Hospital in Fortaleza, like the hospital of the same name in Recife and their counterparts throughout the Northeast, cannot adequately treat the numbers of sick children admitted each day. Already 10 percent smaller on average than children

in the rest of Brazil, the malnourished children of the *sertão* are doomed to fall even further behind. After observing the widespread physical and mental damage to youngsters in the region, João Alves, the governor of the state of Sergipe, declared, "We are creating a sub-race." Infant mortality in some cities in Ceará and neighboring Piauí is approaching 300 per 1,000 births, more than twenty-five times the rate in the United States.

Such conditions have driven normally law-abiding people to desperate acts. In scores of cities throughout the *sertão*, crowds have sacked markets and looted government emergency food warehouses. At least 5,000 people rioted last August in Canindé, a town fifty miles south of Fortaleza. In Fortaleza in the same month, a band of starving men and women in search of food stormed the governor's mansion before the police turned them away. There were also raids last summer on two towns in the Cariry Valley, an area known as the breadbasket of the Northeast: *flagelados* invaded the government food warehouse in Juazeiro do Norte, also a famous religious center, and the neighboring city of Crato was invaded three times in one week.

Two years ago, when the raids began in earnest, they were so unusual and frightening that the mayors of thirty towns in the state of Piauí fled to the capital city of Teresina. But generally, officials have been sympathetic to the plight of the hungry. Almost no one has publicly condemned the *flagelados*, and, indeed, during a wave of lootings last summer, Bishop Francisco Austragésimo de Mesquita, a church official identified with the *sertão*, defended the invasions as a natural response to hunger.

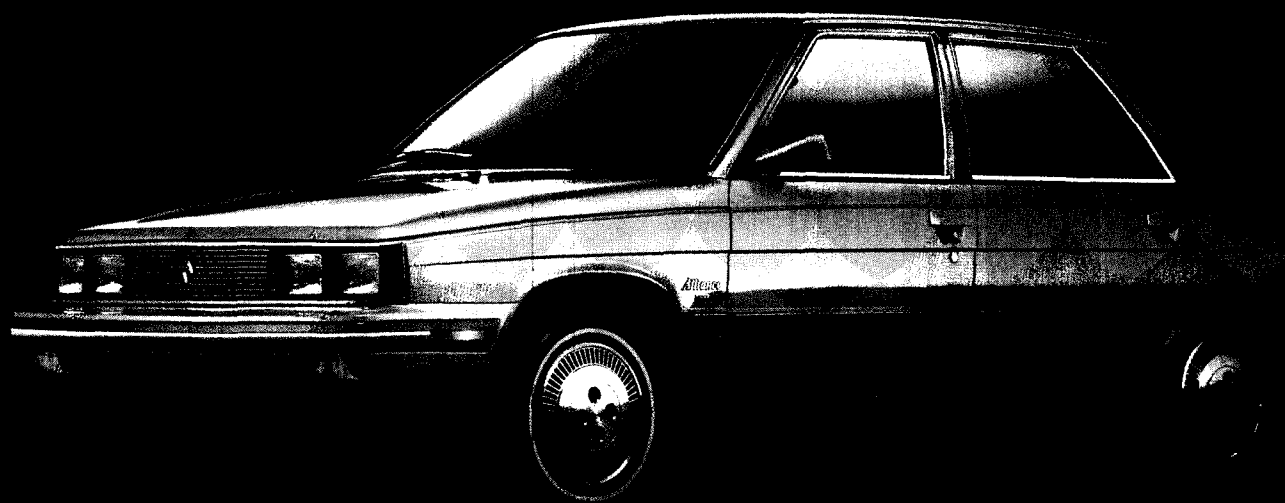
The invasion last summer of Monte Santo, an isolated town of 20,000 in the state of Bahia, sent shock waves throughout the Northeast, because the village occupies a special place in both the literature and the religion of the *sertão*. Near Monte Santo, shortly before the turn of the century, the self-styled prophet Antonio Conselheiro and hundreds of his followers held out for ten months against thousands of federal and state soldiers—every last man, woman, and child fighting to the death. Their resistance was immortalized in Brazil's most famous book, *Rebellion in the Backlands*, by Euclides da Cunha, the military engineer for whom a nearby city

is named. Monte Santo is at the foot of Mount Pico-Araça, in the midst of an especially rugged area of scrub forest. The mountain so forcefully reminded an eighteenth-century missionary of Calvary that he exhorted the populace to build a two-mile-long switchback trail up its side. Along the trail are at least a dozen white stone chapels representing the Stations of the Cross. On top, where the original temple was replaced by a church in 1925, the panoramic view is breathtaking.

One of the most impressive sights from up high is the whitewashed cemetery at the northern edge of town, which lately has begun to fill up with drought victims. The nearby hospital, which looks so serene from atop the mountain, lacks both the manpower and the medicine to treat the influx of *flagelados*. Father Enock Oliveira, the local priest, says that more than half the children he baptizes are already in an advanced state of dehydration. Small wonder: the city's water supply is trucked in, and then transported home in large kerosene cans that women skillfully balance on their heads. But delivery schedules are erratic; Curral Velho, only ten miles away, suffered for more than two weeks when the water trucks simply failed to appear.

YET, AS BAD as it is, the misery throughout the *sertão* would be far worse without the relief programs administered by the Superintendency for the Development of the Northeast (SUDENE), a twenty-four-year-old federal agency. It currently employs 2 million *sertanejo* men and women in public-works programs, to build and repair wells, reservoirs, and catch basins. It distributes vitamin supplements to children under three and to nursing and pregnant women. More than 3,500 SUDENE tank trucks scour the backlands, hauling water to communities that are without any other source.

The backlands tragedy has revealed depths of charity in the national character that few Brazilians knew existed. Shocked by graphic television coverage of the human cost of the drought, Brazilians from all walks of life have responded generously. College students have distributed food and clothing in *sertão* villages, the air force has airlifted tons of donated supplies to the Northeast, and banks have set up nationwide donation centers. Outsiders have "adopted" *ser-*



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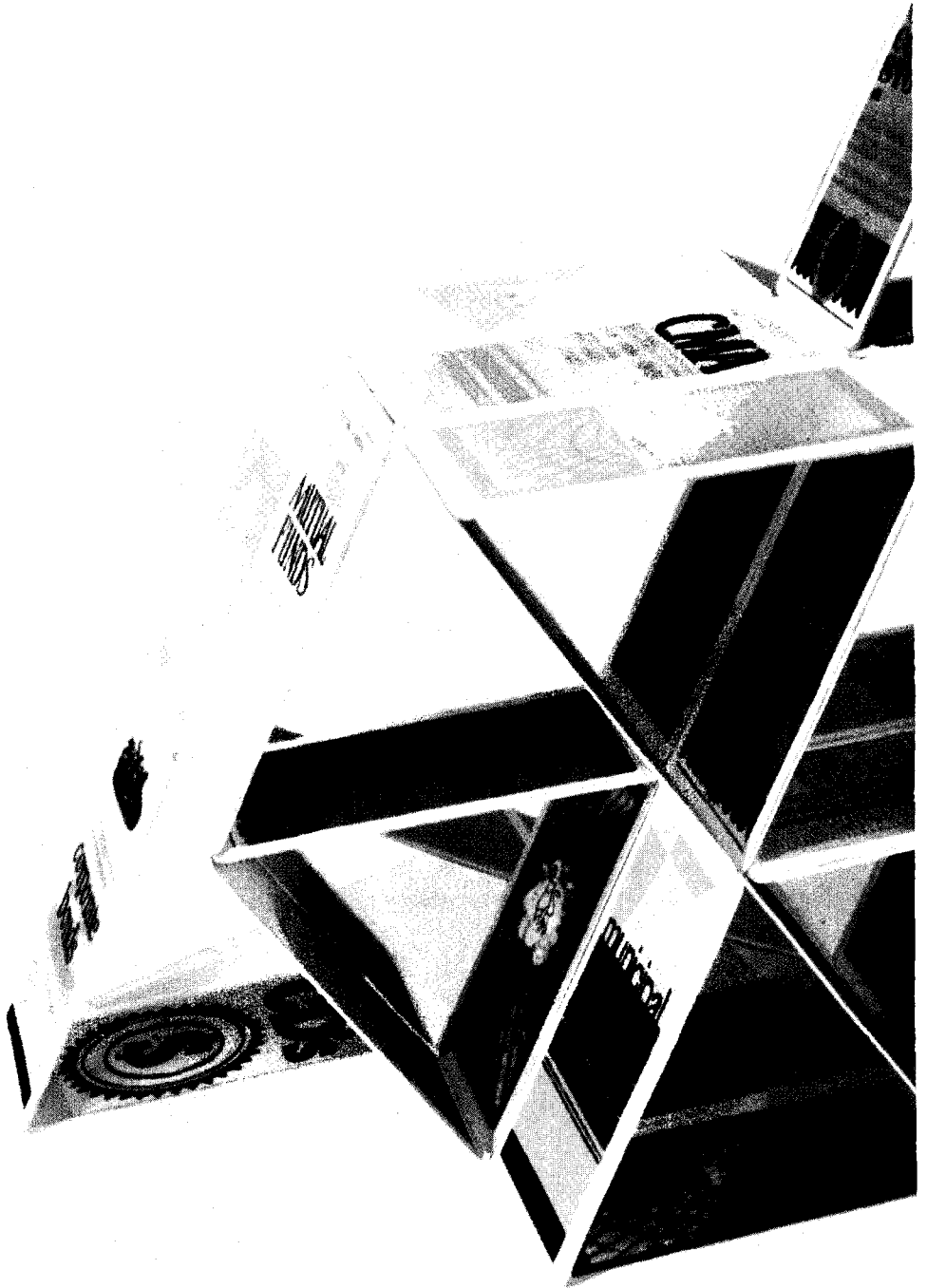
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tão families, by pledging to send monthly stipends. (A young couple of modest means in Belo Horizonte adopted more than fifteen such families.) The Brazilian Red Cross has been in the forefront of relief efforts, supplemented by various civic organizations. Even in Euclides da Cunha, a red, white, and blue banner strung across the center of town urges residents to help "our *flagelado* brothers" by donating to the local Lions Club's drought-relief program.

Generous as the donations are, however, they are no match for the widespread suffering. Even the government programs amount to little more than a bandage over a gaping wound. The \$20 a month paid to workers in the relief program, although often literally the difference between life and death, is not enough to feed adequately the average family of six.

The emergency programs have other shortcomings as well. They give the big landowners on whose property many of the irrigation projects are situated too much control over the allocation of funds. Some money has gone to politically connected prostitutes, soccer players, and soldiers, rather than to needy subsistence farmers, and some communities have been bypassed entirely, because their officials belong to the opposition political party.

The broader criticism of the government's programs is that the relief actions merely treat symptoms while leaving undisturbed the region's feudal system of land ownership. Four percent of the farming population in the Northeast controls more than 50 percent of the arable land, according to a World Bank study compiled in 1974, and 3 million *sertanejos* earn on average only \$50 a year—one sixth of the per capita income for the Northeast as a whole. Economists at the Banco do Nordeste say that per capita income in the Northeast has grown, perhaps even doubled, since 1974, but that the figure for the *sertanejos* has changed hardly at all.

Ironically, the *sertão* is a stronghold of support for the ruling Social Democratic Party. Nonetheless, the party has no lack of critics. Engineers, journalists, geologists, and academics in the region complain that successive governments have failed to devise an economical way to divert water from the 1,800-mile-long São Francisco River to the backlands. Hydroelectric and irrigation projects have dramatically improved conditions

along a 200-mile stretch of the river in northern Bahia, but elsewhere hundreds of farms close to the river have simply withered away. Critics invariably remind visitors how, by contrast, the deserts of the southwestern United States bloomed soon after the federal government harnessed the Colorado River, and how Israel transformed its desert into gardens and citrus groves. Harnessing the São Francisco would be costly, of course, and is probably out of the question for a nation already reeling under a \$91 billion foreign debt and triple-digit inflation—but it would be no more costly than further decades of patchwork emergency programs.

Brazil is indeed learning its lesson about false economy. The Aerospace Technical Center, which in 1979 correctly forecast the start of the current drought, and which also predicted that it would last at least six years, at the same time proposed a solution: a cloud-seeding project to evaporate seawater off the northeastern coast and transform it into water-laden clouds to be carried by winds over the *sertão*. The cost would have been only a fraction of the amount the government has spent on the relief programs of the past few years, but by the time the government dusted the idea off last summer, it could no longer afford even an experimental program.

Except for efforts by the Red Cross and limited help from Oxfam and other private organizations, world response to Brazil's plight has been minimal—and the Brazilian government is largely to blame. "It takes the position that it doesn't want international assistance, because it wants to motivate its own people, and we can't go in unless we're asked," says an official with the United Nations Disaster Relief Office. His statement is echoed by a UNICEF official, who adds that UNICEF's relief effort has been limited largely to providing advice on health and hygiene.

FAMINE AND DROUGHT are commonplace. UNICEF recently estimated that 40,000 children die each day in developing countries, half of them from malnutrition, dehydration, and illnesses that could be prevented easily and at low cost. (Another 40,000, survivors, will be left blind, deaf, crippled, or retarded.) A severe drought on the African continent this very minute threatens 150 million people in twenty-two countries with famine.

The United States is not totally indifferent. President Reagan has pledged to support UNICEF's plan to educate communities in four life-saving measures: immunization, breast-feeding, monitoring children's growth, and oral rehydration therapy, an inexpensive way of compensating for diarrhea with packets of potassium-reinforced sucrose and salt that are mixed with drinking water. Also, Washington has promised to double its emergency food aid to Africa this year, bringing total food and agricultural aid there to about \$500 million. But both efforts are only the smallest portion of what is needed, although perhaps they are all that can reasonably be expected from an Administration that believes short-term aid creates long-term disincentives.

Regrettably, this point of view may well be appropriate in Brazil, where droughts have been exacerbated by decades of corruption and poor planning. It is not supply-side economics but common sense that suggests that a country is better off solving its own problems with its own resources. But the time to argue those issues is after the drought ends. Meanwhile, Brazil, the world's most populous Roman Catholic nation, can hardly ignore Pope John Paul II's remark, to participants in the Food and Agriculture Organization's 22nd World Conference, in Rome last November, that "the right to have enough to eat is certainly an inalienable human right, and it imposes the obligation to ensure that everyone really does have enough food."

And for all Brazil's prideful insistence on going it alone, many Brazilians believe the country would welcome food from America's vast stockpiles if it was given discreetly. *Nordestinos* are sensitive to memories of Americans in Recife in the early 1960s, when officials of the Alliance for Progress often interfered in domestic matters, including local elections.

Such interference would no longer be tolerated; nor would it be necessary. The American purpose must be only to provide humanitarian relief to a hemispheric neighbor, millions of whose citizens otherwise face at least one more year of famine.

—Edwin McDowell

Edwin McDowell, who reports on publishing for The New York Times, is a frequent visitor to Brazil.

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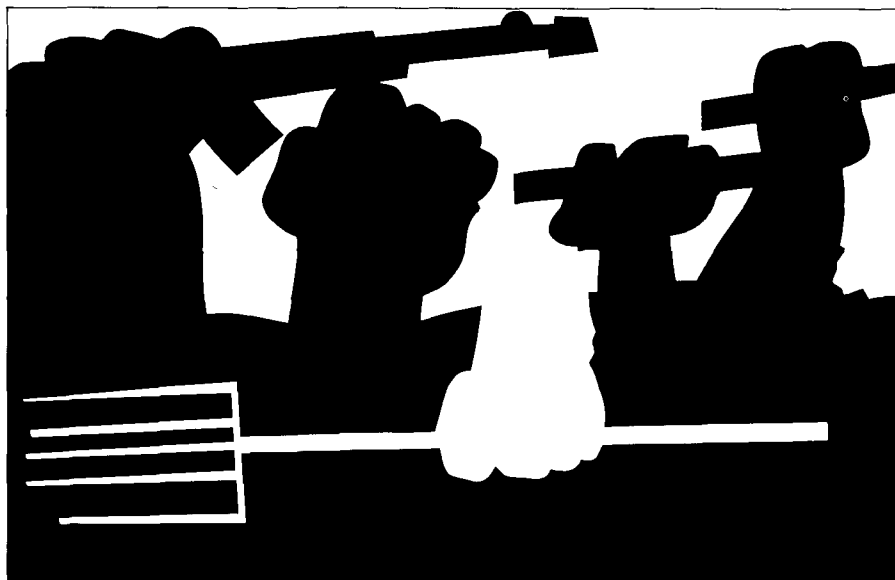
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COSTA RICA PRACTICALLY NEUTRAL

*The fear of falling into
the turmoil of its neighbors
keeps a fragile democracy alive despite
increasing economic divisions*



COSTA RICA NEVER quite admits that it is part of Central America. Central America is where tyrants rule and peasants die and women weep for men who vanish in the night. Costa Rica is the nation that turned its swords into plowshares.

Recent political and economic events belie the seeming tranquillity. In 1979, the Sandinistas, then hailed as Nicaragua's saviors, ran freely on Costa Rica's "neutral" soil. In 1980, the country's economy crumbled, pushing two thirds of the population of 2.3 million below the poverty line and diminishing the middle class, to which Costa Rica attributes its political stability. Late that year, isolated incidents of political violence began. The dozen or so bombings, kidnappings, and shootings, a small number by regional standards, were a dozen or so more than Costa Rica had been accustomed to. Now, Nicaraguan rebels—disillusioned Sandinistas—are back in the northern hills, old faces fighting a new war, as Costa Rica again proclaims a fragile neutrality.

That the troubles of Central America

would afflict Costa Rica was inevitable; what is surprising is the ease with which the democracy has absorbed the shocks. The nation's resilience stems from a mixture of historic good fortune and a conviction, perhaps not wholly realistic, that geography doesn't have to be destiny.

Even in villages near the Nicaraguan border, where several Costa Ricans have died as a result of murky connections with Sandinistas or their foes, concern about the fighting next door scarcely blunts the obdurate optimism. In La Cruz, a typical hamlet of 2,000, just minutes from Nicaragua, the proprietor of a lunch counter plies customers with sugary fruit drinks, offering unconvincing protestations of ignorance about anti-Sandinista activity nearby as well as concise homilies about contemporary Costa Rica. "We are poor," the old man says. "What we have, we owe to the banks, to the houses of credit. But none of that matters. It can get worked out when we die. And while we live, we Costa Ricans, we will always have joy."

During the more than thirty months I spent in Costa Rica, I often heard words like those. Costa Ricans are frequently excited but seldom perturbed, and they imply that this is how they have always been. Since a brief revolution in 1948, Costa Rica has been a social democracy, building roads, schools, and hospitals while neighboring nations built arsenals. Not even that civil war is recalled as a particularly traumatic event; its wounds were not permitted to fester—indeed, they barely left scars.

"We have always preferred shouting to

shooting," says Armando Vargas, the minister of communications, repeating a national cliché. Actually, Costa Ricans are not so fond of shouting, either. They prefer to *quedar bien*, to be gently congenial, to forgive and forget. Their history, as they tell it, is an uneventful one. Since independence from Spain, in 1821—which arrived by mail while Costa Ricans were still debating whether to fight for it—the nation has sought compromise and conciliation, avoiding most of the internecine struggles, the civil wars, and the coups and counter-coups that plague so many Latin nations.

Because the name the conquistadors gave the country—literally, "Rich Coast"—proved to be a striking misnomer, the foreign powers dominant in the region, from Spanish viceroys to British proconsuls to United States Marines, more or less ignored Costa Rica. Material poverty bred moral wealth as the country, left in peace, developed a relatively egalitarian rural society. The Indian population, sparse when the Spaniards arrived and sparser after exposure to European brutality and disease, was soon assimilated. Today, Costa Ricans think of themselves not as *mestizos* but as descendants of white Europeans.

From time to time, dictators emerged, but they were seldom strong enough to keep power for long. Some, it is said, had the strength to stay on but lacked the desire. "Our dictators did what they wanted to do," says Edgar Ugalde, a prominent deputy in the legislative assembly, "and then they went home again."

The closest that Costa Rica has come to a dictator in generations is José "don Pepe" Figueres. Now an elder statesman whose sins are always forgiven with bemused tolerance, Figueres led the 1948 revolution, ruled a military junta for a few months, and then abolished both the junta and the army. Content to await a triumph at the polls, Figueres turned the presidency over to a more conservative leader. He was elected president in 1953 and 1970, and his National Liberation Party has dominated, but not monopolized, Costa Rican politics for thirty years.

RECENTLY, SCHOLARS HAVE taken a critical look at this standard history. They have documented the startlingly grave inequities in land tenure, the power of the elite, and the ways in which the United States interferes without resort-

ing to the Marines. Some historians call the long-standing belief among Costa Ricans in their racial and moral purity the "white legend." It has instilled in them a faith in peace, democracy, and man's fundamental dignity which is genuine and deeply ingrained. The legend's power explains why Costa Rica differs from its neighbors in such tangible ways. There is, for instance, an upper class here, but it lacks both the arrogance and the clout of a true oligarchy. Class consciousness is muted by superficial but significant niceties—a wealthy matron respectfully calling her maid *doña*—and by the real possibility of social mobility, through an extensive system of public schools and colleges. There is political mobility, too. A politician, like the current president, Luis Alberto Monge, can attain power despite a humble background, without benefit of the military cliques and academies that mold rulers elsewhere. Anyone can vote; everyone does.

Above all, the gentleness of the culture contrasts with the violence so palpable in nearby nations. Here, even bullfights are democratic free-for-alls, where village boys leap into the ring and play *torero* and girls take turns being beauty queens, waving white-gloved hands from a pickup truck circling the unpaved plaza. The bull is treated kindly: he is roped or ridden but never maimed or killed.

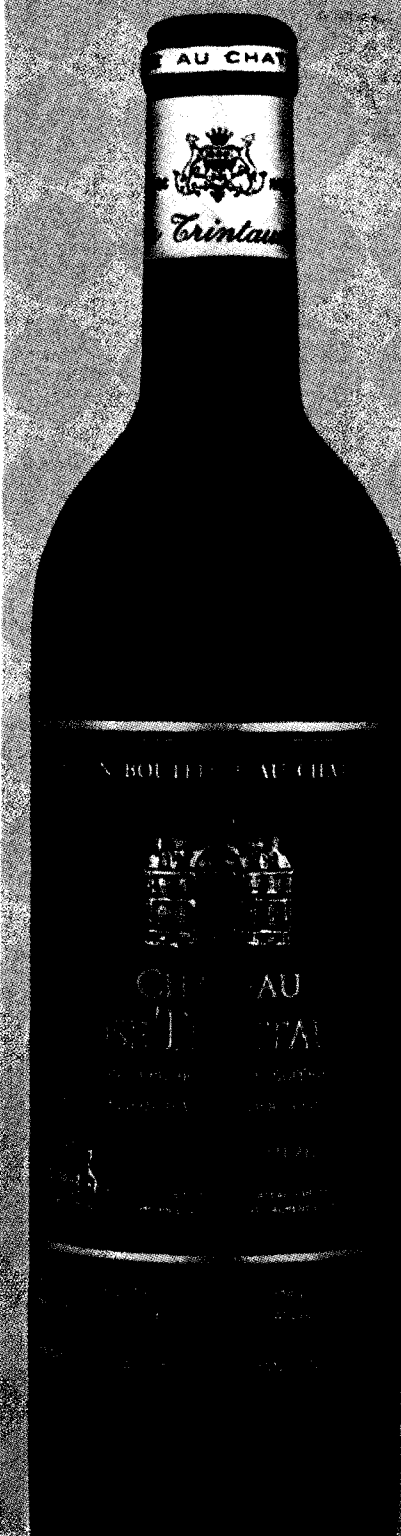
Such customs shed light on how the country has been able to solve many of its problems, particularly those of health and education. Other problems linger. Land distribution, for example, is "solved" every few years; it is unclear whether the latest proposed reform, a response to demonstrations in banana zones last summer, will be carried through. Efforts to eliminate the pervasive inefficiency that tangles the political process and chokes the economy (for instance, the phone company penalizes the customer even when the post office certifies that it delivered the bill to the wrong address) often come to nothing. Facing difficulties, Costa Ricans tend to shroud themselves in their historic sense of invulnerability and to play down the potential for catastrophe. At best, they procrastinate and hope the problem will go away. At worst, they blame it on the world beyond Costa Rica's tranquil borders. One June night in Los Chiles, a border town, two rival police forces, the Rural Guard and the Civil Guard, had a shoot-out after spilling drunkenly from a

dance hall, Sala Washington, as a band called America played a salsa version of the theme song from *Rocky*. The brawl was a scandal that kept the church bells ringing and the villagers chattering on verandas until dawn. The next afternoon, it was all but forgotten, dismissed by one half of the town as a disturbing but harmless aberration and by the other half as a cloudy Nicaraguan plot.

Similar attitudes prevailed nationally during the political violence that began in December of 1980, when a right-wing Nicaraguan commando attacked a left-wing radio station, and that abated two years later, after the kidnapping, allegedly by leftist Salvadorans, of a Japanese businessman living in the capital, San José. All told, there were fourteen incidents in twenty-three months. Only four—two shoot-outs, a bombing, and an assault on U.S. embassy guards en route to their posts—involved primarily Costa Ricans, members of a group so extreme that most radical political parties denounced it. The other violent outbursts were intrigues involving Nicaraguans and Salvadorans (including, allegedly, diplomats from both countries) as well as Hondurans, Guatemalans, Argentines, Chileans, and perhaps Uruguayans. Among the victims were a plane full of tourists, hijacked on their way to the capital from a beach; the Honduran Embassy and the Honduran national airline; a suspected right-wing Cuban-American gunrunner who had escaped from a Florida jail; a Salvadoran shoe manufacturer; and a rich, twenty-one-year-old Iranian exile, who was kidnapped outside a discotheque late one night and whisked off to Panama, where, according to the Costa Rican police, Salvadorans held him for more than a year.

During 1982, Costa Ricans worried that their capital was becoming what Eduardo Aguilar, the judicial police chief, called "a center of international espionage" and what others called "the new Beirut." The concern focused on left-wing groups, who, even though they were responsible for more than half of the violent acts, received a disproportionate share of attention from politicians and the press (and from Jeane Kirkpatrick and the U.S. State Department) in comparison to equally fanatic right-wing groups. But the worry always faded after each incident, or translated into ultra-patriotism that kept the police switchboards deluged with helpful

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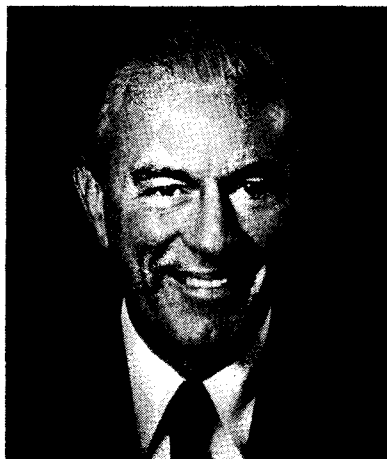
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A mind is a terrible thing to waste.

and not-so-helpful tips about suspicious (that is, foreign) characters in the barrios. Seven months passed. Last June, another bomb went off and another man died. That incident, which involved Nicaraguans, was also dismissed as a tragic anomaly—one of those things that never happens here, no matter how many times it has happened before.

LESS EASY TO shrug off is the economic collapse, which caused hardship and discontent in a social democracy that had previously encouraged, and often fulfilled, people's rising expectations. "La Crisis," as the early 1980s are known, was caused by bad management and worse luck. The country printed bank notes it could not back and spent money it did not have. It eventually hired U.S. consultants not just to restructure the prodigious foreign debt but first to tally it up. Export markets deteriorated and investors ran scared. Annual inflation hit 100 percent by 1982, and there was a devaluation of 80 percent. Unemployment and underemployment continue to affect more than a quarter of the work force. Per capita income, more than \$2,100 in 1980, dropped sharply (although economists differ as to how sharply). The economy was relatively stable last year, and many key indicators, notably the inflation and exchange rates, improved. But stability is not recovery; exports remain stagnant and the debt burden is large. Economists say that it will take years, probably the rest of the decade, to undo the damage that was done.

The crisis aggravated disparities in wealth that had been widening unnoticed during the years of prosperity. Juan Manuel Villaluso, an economist, wrote in a 1982 study: "An enormous danger exists that in the not very distant future, the distributive scheme will no longer be 'socially acceptable,' and the Costa Rican *convivencia* [social harmony] that for decades has been an example in Central America and the world could be called into question." San José shops carry overpriced appliances and imported designer jeans. Travel agents book excursions to Disney World, Spain, and Alaska. Outside, though, a half-dozen shoeshine boys gather on corners where during the bountiful 1970s there would have been only one. Vendors, once restricted to a few shabby downtown blocks, throng the sidewalks. Beggars—cripples and children—canvass neigh-

borhoods, insistently knocking on strangers' doors.

In the countryside, the poverty has a different hue. It is worst in the outlying provinces, where large estates are more common. With no land, or not enough, the rural poor struggle to make a living. In one mountain village, overshadowed by a huge wooden cross, barefoot women cook over a wood-burning stove on a fiesta day. They talk of *la Crisis* as they make half the tamales they made in previous years and skimp on the pork in the filling. Near a Pacific banana port, a doctor fulfilling his mandatory term of public service frets about his patients' malnutrition, the rancid meat they consume, the dwindling supply of medicines in his cabinet. Up north, on a muddy road alongside a cattle ranch, a little boy, umbrella in one hand, machete in the other, seeks odd jobs when he should be in school.

Gloomy observers on the right have predicted for several years that revolution is imminent. A leftist congressman contends, with some justification, that the government's austerity programs, tailored to International Monetary Fund demands, are crushing the poor. He forecasts that the nation will be "red hot" within months. These views, however, ignore the depth of the anti-communism that has long underpinned Costa Rica's social democracy. The leftist coalition did poorly in the 1982 elections. Except in intellectual circles and a minority sector of the labor movement that have a fashionable taste for Marxism—and not necessarily Soviet-style Marxism—the left is tolerated rather than trusted. After more than three years of increasing hardships, the rare social protests focus on narrow economic, not broad political, issues. The only widespread demonstrations, cutting across class and provincial boundaries, occurred last June, when the electric company tried to foist a 92 percent rate hike on the populace—22 percent more than had been legally approved. Roadblocks went up in peaceful protest. The leading newspaper, independent but increasingly conservative, warned of a "pre-insurrection." The roadblocks came down as soon as the government ordered the rates rolled back. The economy may give grounds for shouting, but not shooting—not in a country that, during the worst of the crisis, ran out of bread but still had cookies.

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far stronger than the threat itself, fortifies the right, bringing to mind analogies with Uruguay. As higher productivity becomes the national rallying cry, businessmen wield increasing political power despite their economic weakness. Some business groups, never comfortable with the semi-socialized economy, assault such long-standing economic policies as nationalized banking. Investors, particularly from the United States, are wooed with seductive tax breaks and with reminders that a strong dollar buys cheap labor. Battles about squatters' rights have dragged on for years, but now conservative landowners whisper about "communist orchestration."

THE NEW CONSERVATISM and the economic conditions that deepen the nation's dependency on the United States have led to a two-handed game of dollar diplomacy. Washington wants a Central American showplace democracy. Costa Rica wants U.S. investment and aid.

Within seven months of being inaugurated, in May of 1982, Monge met with Ronald Reagan twice in Washington and once in San José. A short, pudgy former labor leader whose ties to the Socialist International remain strong, Monge is an odd deputy to Reagan's sheriff. As Reagan became more strident about Central America, Costa Rica's foreign-policy statements echoed his alarm, hailing El Salvador as a nascent democracy and condemning Nicaragua as a menace.

Thousands of Costa Ricans welcomed Reagan when he visited, in December of 1982. Hundreds of thousands greeted the Pope when he visited, three months later. Perhaps it was a coincidence—discord about foreign policy peaked within the ruling National Liberation Party at about the same time—but within a week of the Pope's visit, Costa Rica issued a soft but significant declaration of independence from Reagan. The very week in March that Reagan went to Congress to try to double military aid to El Salvador, Monge called for regional peace talks that would exclude the United States. Monge, an advocate of the so-called Contadora initiative, tries to serve as an intermediary between Salvadoran rebels and U.S. officials. While supporting U.S. diplomatic endeavors and economic-aid programs, he now distances his country from Reagan's more bellicose maneuvers. In the United Na-

tions, for example, Costa Rica condemned the U.S. invasion of Grenada. Fernando Volio, then the foreign minister and an increasingly isolated figure who represented the hawkish wing of the National Liberation Party, protested the vote and resigned, ending a year of speculation about how long such a staunch pro-American could hold on to his job.

"You see, we aren't U.S. puppets," Congressman Ugalde once told me sternly, months before Volio's resignation. "We are pro-U.S. because our people are." This was an overstatement, albeit a typically polite one, for Costa Ricans are manifestly ambivalent about the nation on which they are so dependent—friendly but aloof, supportive but not uncritical.

Coloring the Costa Rican attitude toward the United States is a vivid remembrance of the policy of the big stick. Therefore, Costa Ricans can only partly share Reagan's perception that the conflict on the isthmus of Central America is between East and West. For they know that the turmoil arose from policies that rate only footnotes in U.S. history books but that fill volumes in the history of Central America. Costa Rica, unlike most of its neighbors, was neither occupied by the U.S. Marines nor targeted for a CIA-sponsored coup. It counts its blessings.

During these past months, Costa Rica has gingerly picked its way along the middle of the road, and it is likely to do the same in the months to come. On one side of the road lies what Communications Minister Vargas calls "the legitimate struggle of the Central American people against poverty, tyranny, and oppression." On the other, again in Vargas's words, lies distrust of "Marxist-Leninists who transform, who kidnap, the struggle." In Central America, the middle of the road is the path less traveled, and nowadays, Costa Rica finds that following it is tortuous.

THE ROAD ALWAYS leads north, to Nicaragua, whose revolution Costa Rica avidly supported in 1979. The present wariness toward Nicaragua can't be attributed solely to Washington's pressure to repudiate the Sandinistas, or even to local right-wing polemicists who fear that the "Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan axis" will set fire to the impoverished Costa Rican masses. The Costa Rican "masses" are not now, and were not

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in 1979, terribly interested in being ignited by Nicaraguan revolutionaries. Numerous Costa Ricans of all classes ruefully recall that they thought it would be the other way around—that they would inspire the Sandinistas.

“Listen to what they say on the Sandinista radio. They ridicule our democracy, call it false, call it a farce,” complains a radio technician in the provincial capital of Nicoya who is an embittered partisan of the Sandinistas. “They’ve got all those guns, more than Somoza,” says the owner of a roadside restaurant outside a border town that in 1979 served as a Sandinista base. “Who are they going to use them on? On us?”

Costa Rica has acquired a few guns of its own, although it is still officially with-

lice gunfight took place, some 120 Civil Guards live in tents and bamboo barracks, and carry M-14s and Israeli Galils. Most were trained at U.S. military bases in Panama, according to their commander, Major Juan Felix Barrantes Alfaro, a four-time veteran of U.S. courses and one of the few career officers in the Civil Guard.

The men were dispatched to the Nicaraguan frontier last April to keep the Sandinistas out, after Costa Rica formally protested incursions into its territory. Supposedly, the Guards also keep the anti-Sandinistas out of Costa Rica. But on four visits to the border last year, I grew more and more dubious about the Guards’ effectiveness and intent. I saw peasants, both Nicaraguan and Costa

Pastora, who was expelled from Costa Rica twice and who at this writing is officially barred from the country, does not enjoy the logistical assistance and government complicity he received in Costa Rica during the revolution and that the more reactionary U.S.-backed rebels receive in Honduras. After Pastora’s group bombed the Managua airport, in September, a few days after I left the country, Costa Rican security officials clamped down on the rebels, arresting more than eighty of Pastora’s followers and confiscating arms.

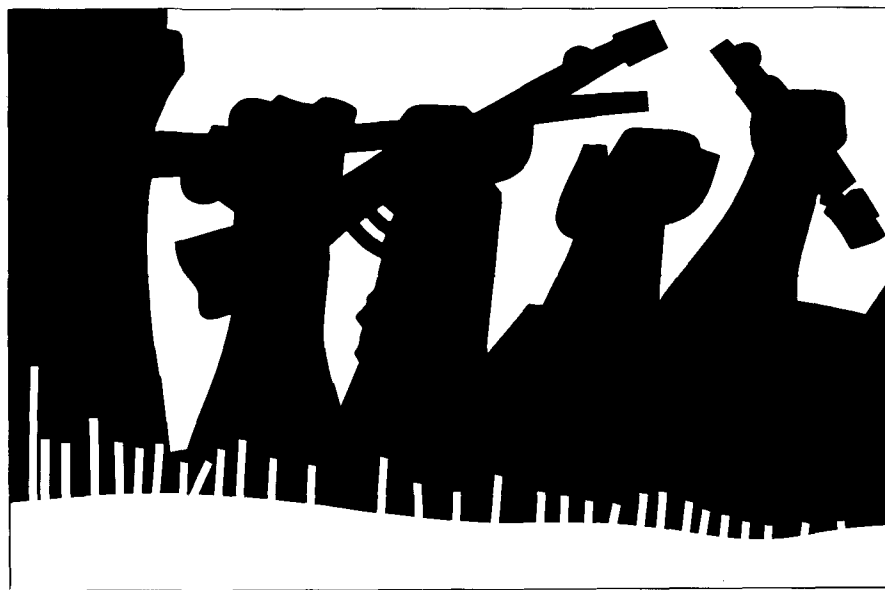
Neutrality for Costa Rica is *quedando bien*. It limits the conflict among Liberation Party leaders about their Nicaraguan policy (a conflict that may lessen without former Foreign Minister Volio’s conservative voice). It prevents Costa Rica from becoming a playground for U.S. war games, an eventuality that Monge clearly seeks to avoid. It safeguards Costa Rica from military reprisals along the border, already the scene of sporadic skirmishes. It polishes the nation’s image for the world.

Declaring neutrality also implies recognizing that Costa Rica has too many problems of its own to go mucking about in those of its neighbors. As the nation has traveled from revolution to counter-revolution on its frontiers, it has teetered but not fallen. Among foreigners living in Costa Rica—diplomats, scholars, refugees, and exiles from many Latin American countries—disaster scenarios proliferate; to them, the “oasis of peace” seems doomed.

But most Costa Ricans refuse to grant these Cassandras more than fleeting acknowledgment. Violence within the country’s borders, and wars just beyond them, shake but do not destroy their faith in a happy past and a happier future. Perhaps myopia will prove to be the fatal flaw, for the problems—economic, social, and, whether they like it or not, geopolitical—are real and pressing. But Costa Rica has a rare capacity for turning fatal flaws into saving graces. It has reaped peace from passivity, equality from indigence, and even democracy from disorganization. Anyone who lives among Costa Ricans long enough will finally concede their point: this is not, after all, Central America.

—Joanne Kenen

Joanne Kenen spent three years in Central America as a free-lance reporter.

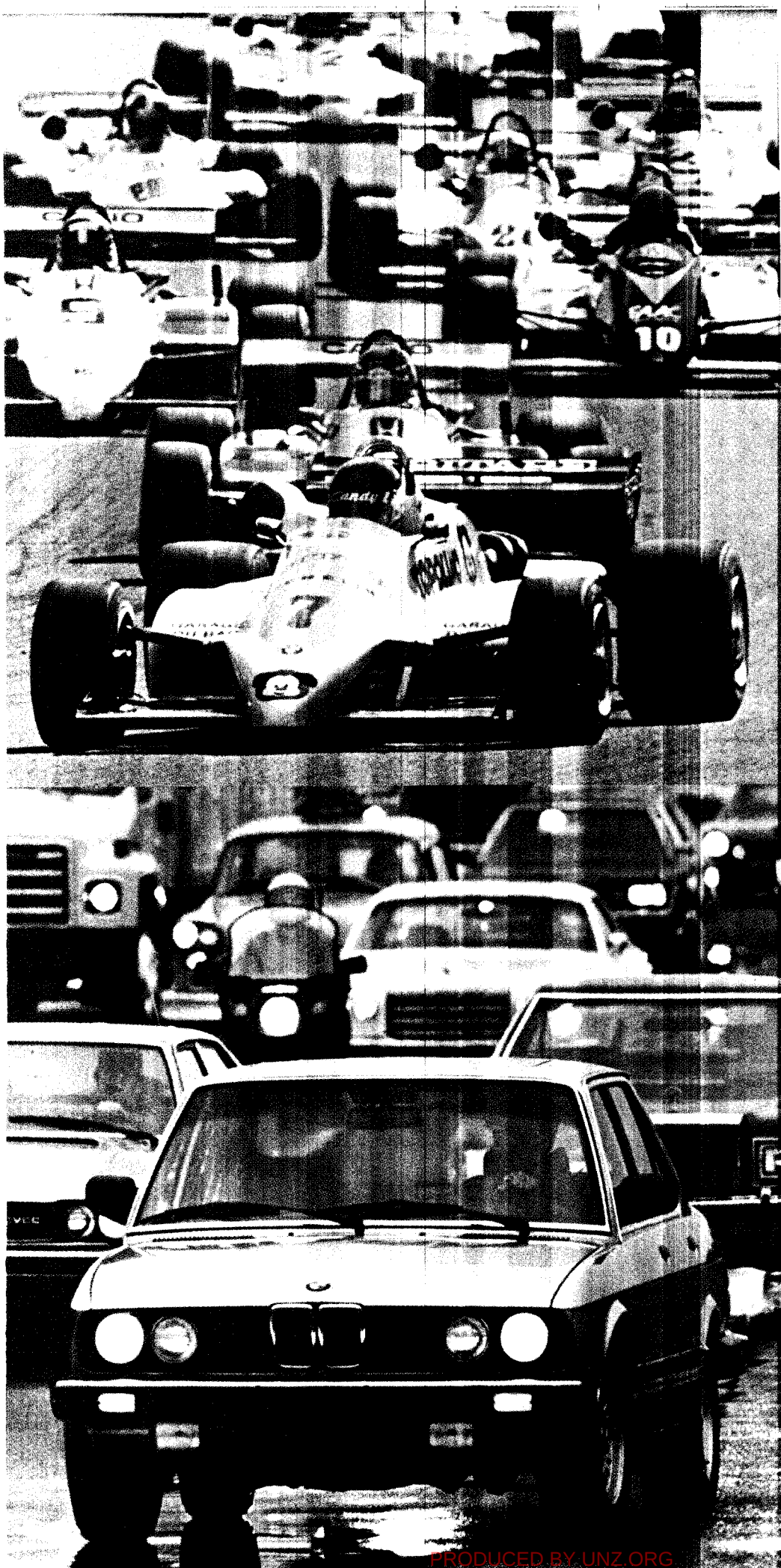


out an army. Many of its 7,000 Civil and Rural Guards are schoolteachers, carpenters, farmers, and the like who say they join the Guards—selected every four years by the party in power—“when my party calls,” “when my country needs me.” Carrying Second World War-vintage rifles, the Guards are gentle and almost comic. They navigate patrol boats only when the sea is calm, and hitchhike or take cabs to the scene of a crime when the precinct can’t pay for patrol-car repairs. They are selected for elite assignments, a sergeant explains, if they can “live without their women for a while,” and begin their training by practicing so that commands to turn right or left face do not provoke nose-to-nose collisions.

Not all the Guards, however, are that bumbling. At Los Chiles, where the po-

Rican, wearing army boots, uniformed men on horseback, and, finally, beyond where cattle fields melt into jungle, a base from which some fifty armed Nicaraguans prepared to enter their homeland. The next day, Major Barrantes told me that he does his best to control the rebels. The problem, he said, is that the guerrillas are awfully mobile.

The rebels follow Edén Pastora, the famed Commander Zero of the 1978 raid on the Nicaraguan National Palace and dissident Sandinista, who claims he will “salvage” the revolution. Simply “Edén” to most Costa Ricans who know him and to many who do not, he lived in exile in a fishing village in northern Costa Rica in the 1970s. Many Costa Ricans feel that he is one of their own—a military hero, a leader, a man of hope, a cross between Zeus and a Latin Robert Redford. Yet



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106,867,107 other cars (not to men-
tion trucks and buses).

Yet pitifully few performance
sedans seem to have taken this into
account.

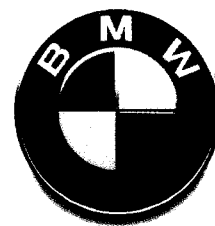
The BMW 528e is perhaps the
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on the open road with exceptional
torque at the speeds you use on roads
paved with cars. It's aided in this
task by another BMW innovation
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An engine management system so
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Even more unique is the fact
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whose creature comforts leave little
to be desired. And whose assembly
occasioned this from AutoWeek, "It's
solid and finished extremely well....
Paint so thick you can sink into
it. Seams lined up straight and true."

In sum, the BMW 528e is an
inspired example of BMW's belief
that technology is most appropriately
used in the service of performance
—even at less than highway speeds.
And a natural outgrowth of a racing
heritage that began when there
was often more traffic on the race-
courses than on the surrounding roads.

You're invited to test drive the
528e at your BMW dealer. We
suggest you allow yourself plenty of
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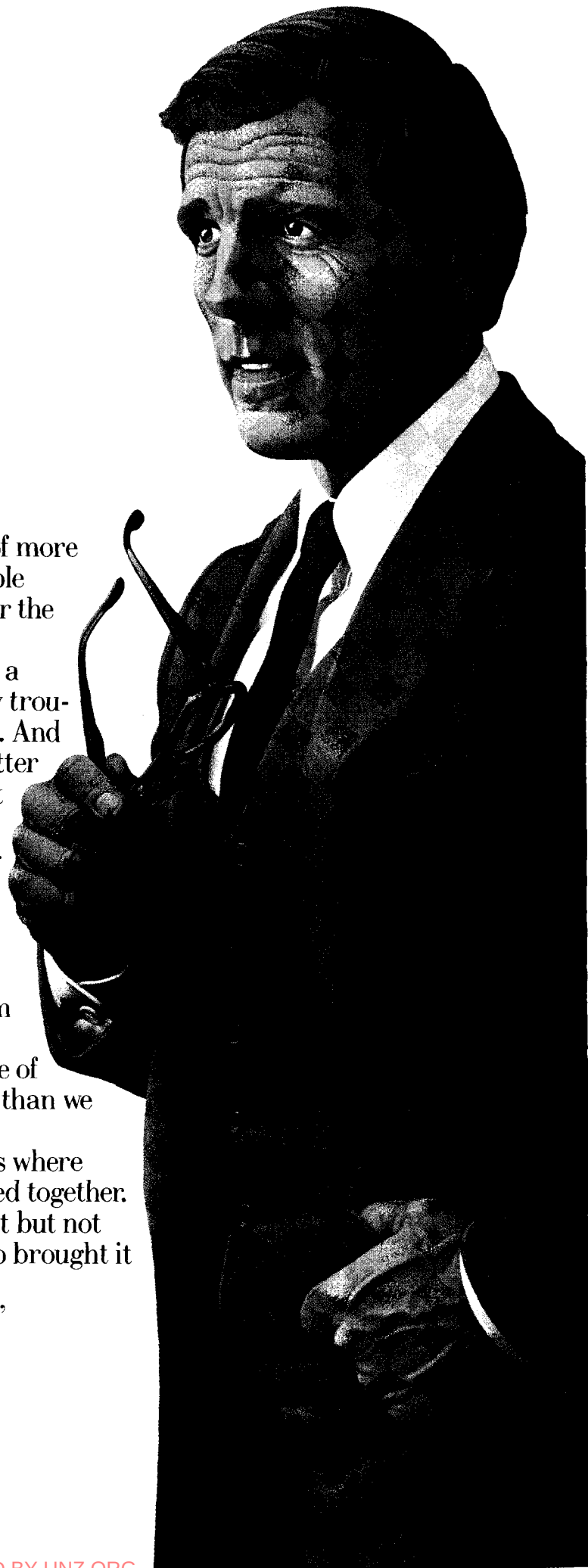
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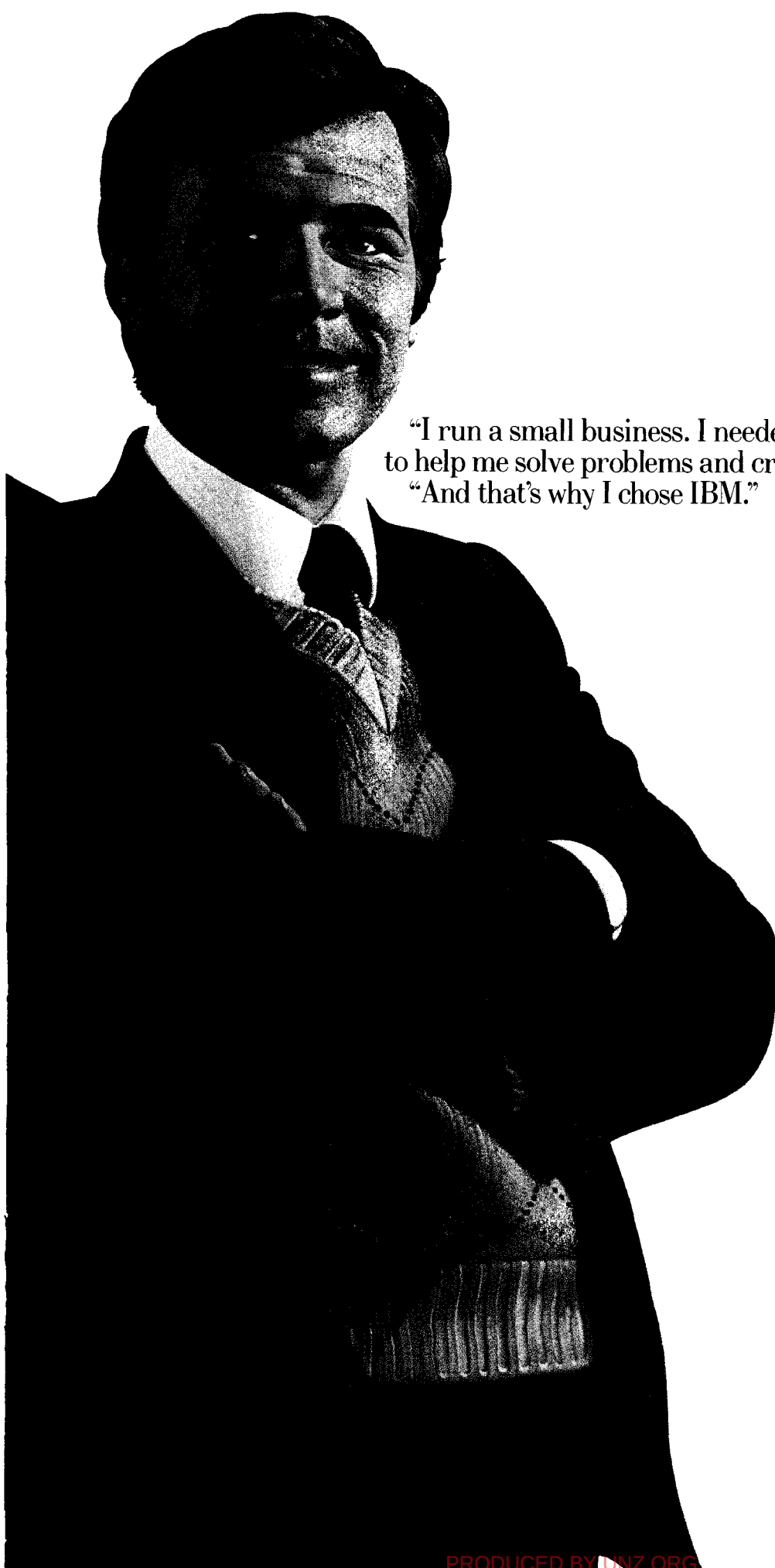
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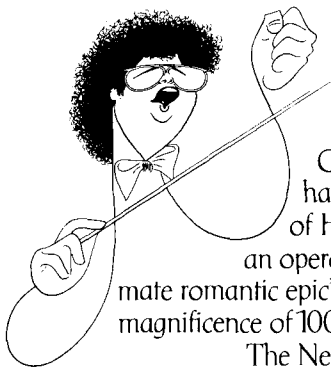
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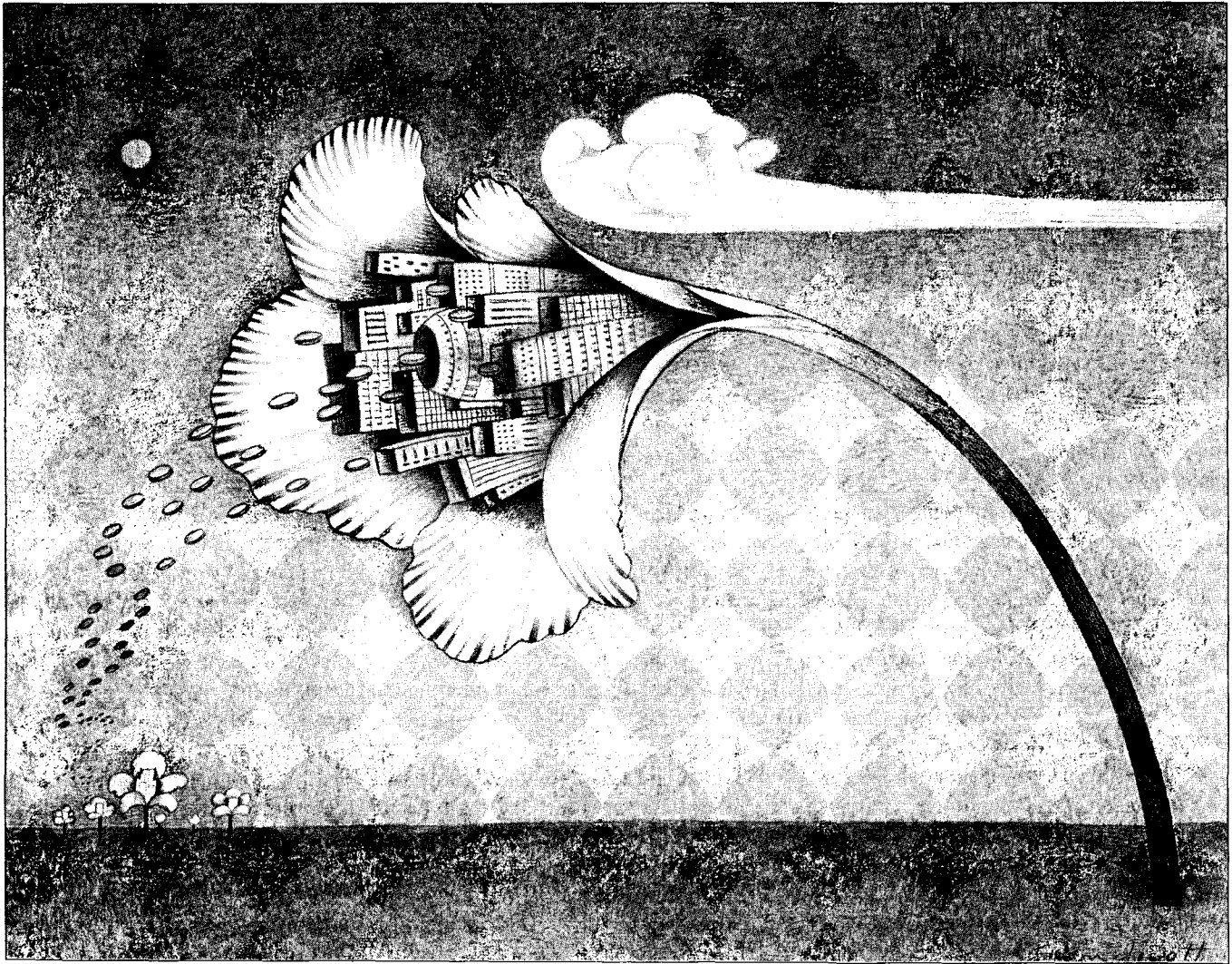


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A new theory of economic life

CITIES AND THE WEALTH OF NATIONS

BY JANE JACOBS

NATIONS ARE POLITICAL AND MILITARY ENTITIES, and so are blocs of nations. But it doesn't necessarily follow from this that nations are also the salient entities of economic life or that they are particularly useful for probing the mysteries of economic structure, the reasons for the rise and decline of wealth. Indeed, the failures of national governments to force economic life to do their bidding suggest that nations are essentially irrelevant to promoting economic success. It also affronts common sense, if nothing else, to think of entities as disparate

as, say, Singapore and the United States, or Ecuador and the Soviet Union, or the Netherlands and Canada, as economic analogues. All they really have in common is the political fact of sovereignty.

Once we remove the blinders that mislead us into assuming that nations are economic units and try looking at the economic world as it is rather than as a dependent artifact of politics, we see that most nations are grab bags of very different economies, of rich regions and poor ones.

We see, too, that among all the various types of economies, those of cities are unique in their power to shape the economies of other settlements, including ones far removed geographically. To take a simple and small example,

Jane Jacobs is the author of The Death and Life of American Cities and The Economy of Cities.

consider the forces at work on the economy of a single hamlet, a little cluster of stone houses perched high in the Cévennes Mountains, in south central France, one of the poorest parts of that country. The hamlet, Bardou, found its way into my Toronto morning paper because it is so charming, having become a kind of Shangri-la for writers, musicians, artists, and craftsmen fleeing the cities of Europe, the United States, and Canada in search of beauty and a cheap, quiet place in which to work.

Bardou has a long history. Some two thousand years ago, when Gaul became a province of Rome, the site was linked to the imperial economy by roads terminating at a collection of iron mines nearby. The iron was taken elsewhere to be shaped into swords, lances, chisels, hinges, ploughs, wheel rims, cauldrons, and the many other items for which iron was useful at the time. Where it went for manufacturing is now unknown. A logical guess is the foundries in Nîmes, an extremely ancient city that had become a metropolis of this part of Gaul in pre-Roman times, or it might have been carried to Lugdunum, now Lyon, which also has an ancient tradition as a metalworking center and which was the hub of the Roman road system in Gaul. Wherever the foundry was, the metal was in sufficient demand there to justify mine roads so well engineered and so solidly built that, though they have gone largely untended and unrepaired for some fifteen centuries, they still serve admirably as hikers' trails. The mines and the roads were abandoned when economic life in this part of Gaul disintegrated, probably in the fourth century.

The area then reverted to wilderness, unpopulated, as far as has been discovered, until the sixteenth century, when squatters—landless peasants pushed up from the valley and slopes below—built themselves the stone houses of the present-day hamlet. They scratched out little garden plots among the rocks, gathered chestnuts and probably caught game in the surrounding forests, and on their poor and rocky soil pursued as well as they could the subsistence arts they had inherited from economies of the distant past more creative than their own. Lifetime after lifetime, nothing changed.

Then, abruptly, in the 1870s, a radical change began to take place. Word somehow arrived that a more desirable life was to be found far away. Perhaps the information percolated back from army recruits who had been stationed in Paris or who had passed through there in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War, or perhaps it came from migrants who had left villages on the mountains' lower slopes. Paris had been drawing in rural migrants for untold generations; the word was very late in reaching Bardou, but once a few venturesome souls left to find city work, a slow but almost total exodus ensued. By 1900, half the population had departed. During the following forty years, everybody left except for three families.

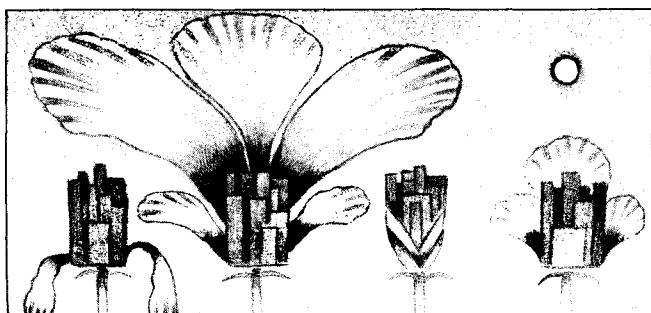
In 1966, when two hikers happened by on the old Roman roads, the ruins sheltered only one aged man. The hikers bought the hamlet from him and from such descendants of

former inhabitants as they and their lawyers could trace. The new owners moved in and invited kindred spirits to join them and help pay expenses. In this incarnation, Bardou has a changing core of year-round residents who live on their savings or by selling their works to publishers and other customers in the city. Holiday renters and campers are welcomed, along with the income they bring. Residents and vacationers alike live chiefly on imported food, of course, and they import nearly all their other necessities, too; but they make a virtue of getting along without such amenities as electricity, telephones, and hot water.

Bardou is an example, in microcosm, of a "passive economy," meaning an economy that does not create economic change itself but instead responds to forces unloosed in distant cities. Time and again, like a toy on a string, Bardou has been jerked by some *external* economic energy or other. In ancient times, the site was exploited for its iron and then abandoned. In modern times, it was depopulated when distant city jobs attracted its people and then was repopulated by city people. The string-pulling was not gentle. But when cities and city people left Bardou alone, had no use for it, the place either had no economy whatsoever, as when it was a wilderness, or else had a subsistence economy that remained unchanging.

We could beat our brains out trying to explain Bardou's economic history in terms of its own attributes, right down to compiling statistics on the probable average yield of chestnuts, the tools used there, the quantity and quality of iron taken out and of that remaining, the man-hours required to build a house, the nature of the soil, the annual rainfall, and so on—and none of this would enlighten us at all as to why and how Bardou's economy took the twists and turns it actually did. On that subject, the local clues stand mute, for the clues that in reality explain Bardou's economic history are to be found in distant city markets, city jobs, city technology (which built the new water system and the old roads), city work transplanted, city capital. To understand both the changes that occurred in Bardou and why there were periods when nothing changed, we must look to clues that do not define Bardou in any way *except as they have acted upon Bardou*.

At first thought it may seem like hairsplitting to differentiate between jerks administered to Bardou by various cities and jerks administered by entities we can choose to call, instead, the Roman Empire, France, the European Economic Community, and the international economy. But it is not hairsplitting. The reality is that those jerks were administered to Bardou by particular cities. All around Bardou lies something called "the French national economy," but that has not been what put Bardou through its economic twists and turns. Why be fuzzy about these things if we can be specific? Rome, perhaps Nîmes or Lyon, Paris, and the various cities from which Bardou's current population of artists, writers, and vacationers have come—these cities are the salient economic entities that have shaped and reshaped Bardou.



DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN CITY ECONOMIES AND THE potpourris we call national economies are not only useful for getting a grip on realities; they are of the essence where practical attempts to reshape economic life are concerned. For example, the failure to make such distinctions is directly responsible for many wildly expensive economic debacles in backward countries. These have resulted from failing to observe that the little understood but economically indispensable function of import replacing or import substitution is specifically a city function, and from thinking of it fuzzily as something a "national economy" can be made to do. I shall be writing a good deal in this essay about how cities grow and become economically versatile by replacing goods that they once imported with goods that they make themselves, for blindness to this ordinary reality is the source of much confusion in our economic thinking in general, as well as the source of much nonsense, waste, and lost opportunity for development.

Cities that significantly replace imports replace not only finished goods but, concurrently, many, many items of producers' goods and services—that is, those sold not to consumers but to other producers. They do it in swiftly emerging, logical chains. For example, first comes the local processing of fruit preserves that were formerly imported; then comes the production of jars or other packaging materials, formerly imported, for which there was no local market of producers until the first step had been taken. Or, first comes the assembly of formerly imported pumps, for which parts are imported; then comes the making of parts, for which metal is imported; then, possibly, comes the smelting of metal for these and other import replacements. The process pays for itself as it goes along. When Tokyo began producing bicycles, first came repair work cannibalizing imported bicycles, then came the manufacture of some of the parts most in demand for repair work, then came the manufacture of more parts, and finally came the assembly of whole, Tokyo-made bicycles. And almost as soon as Tokyo began exporting bicycles to other Japanese cities, some of those customer cities began much the same process of replacing bicycles imported from Tokyo.

A city's production of goods for export—the work that pays for the imports—helps the city's import-replacing process. For example, an enterprise that electroplates tableware for export can also electroplate metal chair and

table legs, and thus can play a part in locally producing furniture that has formerly been imported. Or, better yet, workers can break away from the parent plant and set up a second plant, but this time they will be working in a furniture-making enterprise rather than for a tableware company. I say "better yet" because now there are two establishments, not one, to help carry out the import-replacing process.

Import replacing has always been a *city* process, for good, practical reasons. In the first place, replacing imports is impossible to achieve economically, skillfully, and flexibly—that is, in ways suitable to the time and place—except in a settlement that is already versatile enough at production to possess the necessary foundation for the new work. Cities can build up that kind of versatility, often very rapidly, in part as a result of their already existing export work (if it is reasonably diversified), in part as a result of their previous simpler achievements in import replacing, and in part as a result of the complex symbiotic relationships formed among their various producers. In the second place, city markets—whether of consumers or of producers—are at once diverse and concentrated. These two qualities of the local market make economically feasible the local production of many kinds of goods and services that would not be feasible in rural places, company towns, or little market towns.

Proponents of economic specialization would of course attack the idea that import replacing is economically constructive. Specialization, they would argue, represents the division of labor on a regional or an international scale; division of labor is efficient; and, therefore, specialized economies form and persist because the arrangement is efficient. Adam Smith, for one, believed this.

The argument has two major flaws. In the first place, the reasoning is circular. It assumes that a result—in this case, efficiency—is its own cause. One might as well say that rain is beneficial to plants and that that is why it rains. The second flaw in the argument is that specialized economies are not efficient in any case. That is why they are commonly poor or else subsidized. To be sure, their specialties are sometimes (not always) efficiently produced. But that is not the same as saying these economies are efficient. An economy that contains few different niches for people's differing skills, interests, and imaginations is not efficient. An economy that is unresourceful and unadaptable is not efficient. An economy that can fill few of the needs of its own people and producers is not efficient.

Economic life develops by grace of innovating; it expands by grace of import replacing. These two master economic processes are closely related, both being functions of city economies. Furthermore, successful import replacing often entails adaptations in design, materials, or methods of production, and these require innovating and improvising, especially of producers' goods and services.

Any settlement that becomes proficient at import re-

placing *becomes* a city. And any city that repeatedly achieves explosive episodes of import replacing keeps its economy up-to-date and keeps itself capable of generating streams of innovative export work. Why “explosive episodes”? In real life, whenever import replacing occurs to a significant extent, it occurs in explosive episodes, because it works as a chain reaction. The process feeds itself and, once well under way in a given city, does not cease until all the imports that it is economically feasible to replace at that time and in that place have been replaced. Once an episode is over, a city must build up new funds of potentially replaceable imports, mostly the products of other cities, if it is to experience another chain reaction. The process vastly enlarges city economies as well as diversifies them, and causes cities to grow in spurts. The growth is by no means all net growth, however. Much import replacing, especially in already large cities, merely compensates for the loss of older work. Cities are forever losing older work: some of it because former customer cities take to replacing imports themselves, and even become competitive producers of the items they formerly imported; some because well-established enterprises, after having first developed in the symbiotic city nest, transplant their operations to distant places; some because old work, together with many old enterprises, grows obsolete.

Whenever a city replaces imports with its own produc-

tion, other settlements, mostly other cities, lose sales to it. However, other settlements—either the ones that have lost export sales or different ones—gain an equivalent value of *new* export work. This is because an import-replacing city does not import less than it otherwise would. Rather, it shifts to other purchases in lieu of what it no longer needs from outside. Since the city has everything it formerly had, plus its complement of new and different imports, economic life as a whole expands by grace of this process. Indeed, as far as I can see, city import replacing is at the root of all economic expansion.

It is important, if we are to understand the rise and decline of wealth, for us to be specific about how expansion occurs and of what it consists. The expansion that derives from city import replacing consists specifically of five forms of growth: abruptly enlarged city markets for new and different imports, consisting largely of goods from rural areas and of innovations being produced in other cities; abruptly increased numbers and kinds of jobs in the import-replacing city; new uses of technology, particularly to increase rural productivity; increased transplants of city work into non-urban locations as older, expanding enterprises are crowded out; and the growth of city capital.

These five great forces exert far-reaching effects outside of import-replacing cities as well as within them, ultimately affecting even the remotest places, like Bardou.

CITIES AND THEIR REGIONS

IN THE HINTERLANDS OF SOME CITIES, BEGINNING just beyond their suburbs, rural, industrial, and commercial workplaces are all mixed up together. Such city regions are unique, having the richest, densest, and most intricate of all economies except for those of cities themselves.

City regions are not defined by natural boundaries, because they are wholly artifacts of the cities at their nuclei; the boundaries move outward—or halt—only as the cities’ economic energy dictates. The largest and densest city region in the world today is Tokyo’s. As it grew over the years, it vaulted over mountains so rugged that building rail lines and roads across them required spectacular feats of late-nineteenth-century engineering. The city region of Toronto, where I live, is bounded in some directions by the Great Lakes, but in other directions it simply peters out on gently rolling land presenting no change in natural landscape. Boston’s city region extends into the southern part of New Hampshire, a circumstance that exasperates municipal and state officials in New Hampshire who would like to see, instead, a nice, even smear of economic activity over their whole state. To that end, they contrive inducements to lure Boston enterprises and people into the north, where work is badly needed, and impose obstacles to discourage them in the south, which is already prosper-

ous; but to little avail. For the time being, southern New Hampshire and southern Maine are as far north as Boston reaches in its capacity to reshape its own hinterland radically.

By no means do all cities generate city regions. For example, Glasgow has never done so, even though in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first decade of this century Glasgow was at the forefront of industry and technology, its engineers and engineered products renowned throughout the world, finding export markets far and wide. Fifty miles to its east lies Edinburgh, cultural and commercial capital of Scotland. Edinburgh has had its export triumphs too, but has never generated a city region either. Nor have even the combined economies of the two cities created a dense, rich mixture of city and rural activities in the space that lies between them. Marseille is the most important French seaport, and it has built up considerable industry in addition to its shipping work. But Marseille has no city region to speak of, even though it is the metropolis of all southern France. In the sixteenth century, Naples was the largest city in Christendom. It enjoyed a vast export trade in dyed and woven silks, linens, laces, ribbons, braids, and sweetmeats. At the time, smaller cities like Milan, Paris, London, Antwerp, and Amsterdam were shaping and extending true city regions, but not

Naples. Rome has an amazingly small and feeble city region, considering the city's size. Copenhagen has generated a city region, but not Dublin, Belfast, Cardiff, Liverpool, Lisbon, Madrid, Zagreb, or Moscow. São Paulo has one, but not Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, or Montevideo. Neither Havana nor Santiago de Cuba has generated one, before or during Castro's regime. San Juan never generated one, under either Spanish or American rule.

In central Japan, so many cities have generated city regions that they merge and overlap. But Sapporo, the chief city of Hokkaidō, the large, northernmost island of Japan, has not generated a city region. Atlanta, the metropolis of the southeastern United States, has no city region to speak of, and neither does Seattle, the metropolis of the northwestern United States. But both Los Angeles and San Francisco have generated city regions at the western edge of the continent, and both Boston and New York have done so in the northeast.

The rapidly developing Pacific Rim nations contain cities that have recently generated remarkably dense and intricate city regions, most notably Singapore, Seoul, Taipei, and Hong Kong. But Manila, in the Philippines, has not. Hong Kong's city region has now spilled over into the adjacent province of Kwangtung, but the city of Canton, ancient nucleus of that province, hasn't generated a city region. Shanghai has; so has the cluster of cities—Hankow, Han-yang, and Wu-ch'ang—now sometimes jointly called Wu-han, on the lower Yangtze River. One could go on and on, pondering these differences.

Obviously, cities good at working up export activities or drawing visitors or serving as cultural, political, or religious capitals do not necessarily generate city regions. Something more than exporting or administration is required. That something more is the capacity of the city to replace wide ranges of its imports exuberantly and repeatedly. Cities that generate city regions of any significance possess that capacity, or have possessed it in the past. The very mechanics of a city's import replacing automatically decree the formation of a city region.

The five great forces of economic expansion mentioned above surge up in an import-replacing city, but only in the city itself and in its immediate hinterland do they come to bear simultaneously, with each of the forces exerted to a degree roughly proportional to that of each of the others. When these forces are exerted beyond a city's hinterland, as in Bardou, they are no longer twined together.

TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE FULL PANOPLY IS brought to bear upon the city's own hinterland or region, let us look at one Japanese hamlet that was formerly outside the Tokyo city region, to observe how it changed when the expanding city region finally reached it, in the late 1950s, and incorporated it into a city-regional economy. The example is extreme, because the Tokyo economy is so powerful, but the changes wrought there are

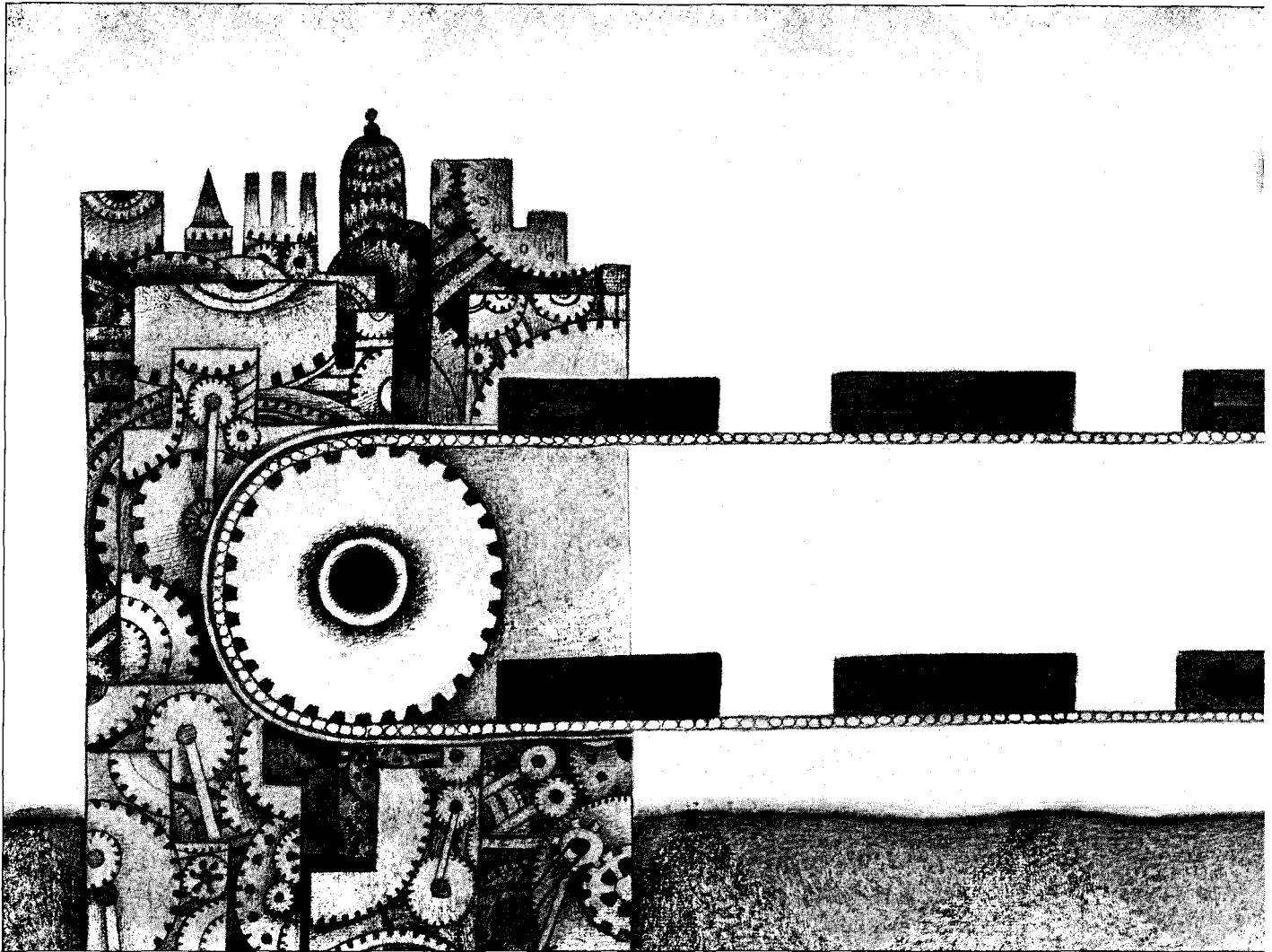
the same in their nature as those wrought in all city regions everywhere.

I am drawing my information from Ronald P. Dore's splendid book *Shinohata: A Portrait of a Japanese Village*, but I shall interpret the information in terms of the five great forces of economic expansion. A British authority on Japan and a specialist in agricultural economics, Dore derived his knowledge of the hamlet from a series of visits he made there over a period of twenty years, beginning in 1955, when the hamlet's traditional rural economy was still intact. So candid were the people in disclosing to Dore their incomes, failures, and successes, as well as many other matters of personal and community concern, that to protect their privacy Dore gave the place a fictitious name. But Shinohata is a real hamlet, engulfed by a real city region. It consists of forty-nine households and their lands, located about a hundred miles northwest of Tokyo (by rail and road), well beyond those rugged mountains that Tokyo's expanding city region vaulted years ago.

In the dim and distant past, Shinohata may have been a settlement living wholly by subsistence agriculture and subsistence crafts, without any ties of trade to cities, but for as long as memory now runs, merchants from Edo, as Tokyo was formerly known, arrived from time to time, and the people of the hamlet sold them a few cash crops, and in return bought a few goods, like tea and paper, and earned the wherewithal to pay such taxes as were demanded in cash. The two chief cash crops in that traditional economy were rice and silk cocoons, the latter becoming increasingly important as time passed. The hamlet people also sold the merchants a little timber, small quantities of forest mushrooms gathered in season, and charcoal of their own manufacture.

Between 1900 and 1955, improved methods and tools increased rice yields considerably. Time saved on rice growing went into the demanding work of cocoon production, which was economically very important during the earlier part of the century, when silk was still the country's chief international export. But as far as Shinohata was concerned, the returns were small. Although some families were able to earn a few untraditional goods, such as bicycles, the hamlet stayed poor and life was an endless round of drudgery and anxiety, or so it seems in retrospect to those who endured it.

Traditional rural settlements tend to suffer drab and dispiriting fates when only one or another of the great economic forces of the city impinges upon them. Changing markets might well have meant greater poverty for Shinohata if they had resulted only in declining demand for its traditional cash crops, and, indeed, markets for silk cocoons have declined. The pull of distant city jobs might simply have depopulated Shinohata, as it depopulated Bardou. A heavy influx of city technology to save farm labor, taken by itself, might have left most of Shinohata's people idle. A single transplanted city factory might have made it a company town.



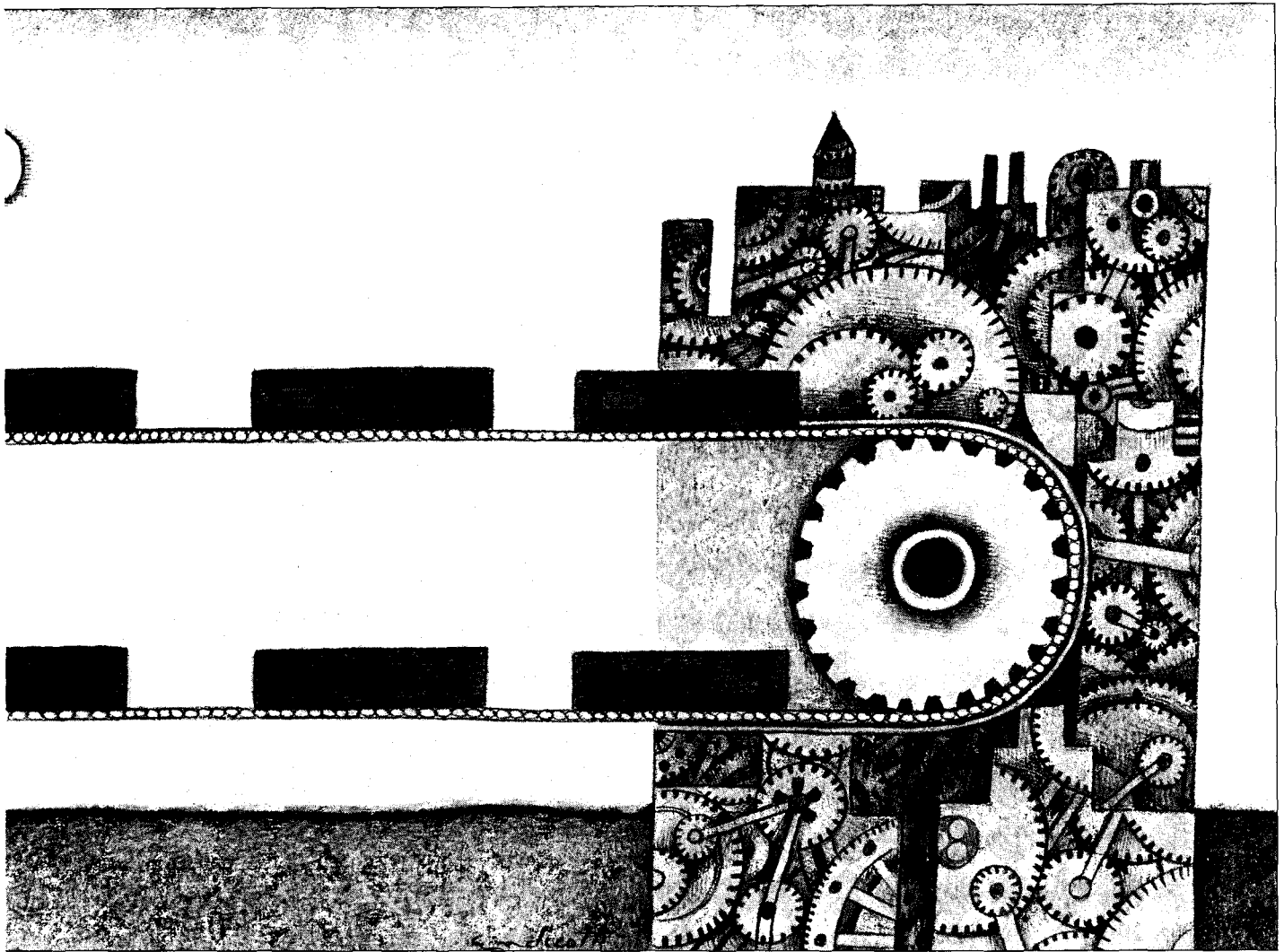
In the event, however, Shinohata's fate after 1955 was radically different from any of these and from its own past as well. The moment Tokyo's expanding city region reached out to embrace Shinohata, all five forces of expansion came to bear on it, each force interacting with the others. But let us look at them in the order previously mentioned: markets, city jobs, technology, transplants of work, and capital.

Tokyo's expanding, solvent markets for new and different imports opened up practical possibilities for crop diversification in its own city region. Beginning in the late 1950s, people in Shinohata found that they could make good money for things never in demand from them before: table peaches, grapes, tomatoes, ornamental shrubs and trees for city gardens, and oak mushrooms, a delicacy commanding a very high price in the city. They experimented with the new possibilities; all those mentioned proved to be highly successful for one or more of the Shinohata farms. Experiments with hops, tobacco, and peaches for canning were failures, soon dropped. Only about twenty of Shinohata's forty-nine households were still nurturing silk cocoons in 1975, and even in these households dependence

on them had much decreased. But forty-eight of the forty-nine households were still farming seriously, and of these almost all continued to grow rice. Indeed, rice yields had actually increased stupendously, alongside the development of the new cash crops.

While those changes were occurring, the multiplying city jobs in Tokyo were exerting their pull on Shinohata. Before 1956, almost nobody had migrated to Tokyo. But from 1956 on, so many young people were attracted by work and life in Tokyo that by 1975 all the children in fourteen of the households had left, and in many of the other thirty-five some of the children had left.

With people leaving the farms, yet with demand for farm produce growing, something had to give. What gave was the old way of doing things. Labor-saving devices were an imperative. Shinohata experienced the classic impasse that occurs in city regions and it responded in the classic way—a way that explains why, historically, rural labor-saving devices have almost invariably been first developed in city regions and only later extended to other types of regions. In Shinohata, as labor-saving devices were rapidly acquired, for work both in the fields and in-



side the houses, the productivity of individuals working the land soared. The example that most astonishes me concerns oak mushrooms. In the mid-1960s, three farmers began experimenting with a new method of production. They bought logs from contractors, drilled holes in them, and inserted plugs of sawdust containing mushroom spores. They then left the logs stacked for a year and a half. After this maturing period, the logs were soaked. In a few days, the mushrooms sprouted, and after they were harvested, the logs were dried out and the cycle repeated. By 1975, these farmers each had 40,000 to 50,000 logs, used heated greenhouses in the winter, and made daily shipments of mushrooms to Tokyo year-round. "Great piles of logs are moved in metal frames from truck to dousing tank and back again by electric overhead lifters running on steel girders," Dore reports. Mushrooms in huge quantities are among many, many items Tokyo can now afford to import, because of the number of import replacements it produces for itself.

Owing to labor-saving equipment, some Shinohata farmers became able to run their operations part time, combining agriculture with wage-earning jobs in Shinohata or its

vicinity, but more commonly some members of a family farmed while others brought in wages and helped out part time in the busiest seasons. In many families, the older members kept the primary responsibility for the land while the young people took the jobs. Seven elderly women who were living alone in 1975 were successfully running farms by themselves, a feat impossible for either men or women before the hamlet began drawing extensively on labor-saving equipment. In some cases equipment for farming parents was financed by their children who had taken jobs in Tokyo.

At the same time that all these changes were occurring, transplanted Tokyo industries were arriving. Dore calls the most impressive of the transplants, which was also the first to arrive, The Factory, in the interest of maintaining Shinohata's anonymity, and he describes it as a huge, efficient, capital-intensive processing plant producing an unspecified food product. The Factory's main economic effect upon Shinohata has been owing not to the work it provides but rather to the good price it paid for the land, most of which had been held in common by the whole hamlet. Proceeds from the sale were divided among all the households

and financed much renovation, kitchen modernization, and new construction that otherwise could not have been afforded so soon. The Factory is little depended on for employment because its local work force is small, and because many other new enterprises arrived soon after. One was started by a Shinohata man who worked for a time in a Tokyo factory where centrifugal separators were made. Wanting to return to Shinohata, he persuaded his employer to give him the district repair franchise.

These transplants of city work convey scant idea, however, of the wide range of nonagricultural livelihoods that have opened up because Shinohata is now intricately connected economically with other settlements in the valley and beyond, in a fashion foreign to the old economy but typical of settlements incorporated into city regions. For example, in one family the wife works in an underwear factory transplanted into a nearby hamlet; her husband has a job in a dye works. In another household, the husband works for a Factory subcontractor, his wife sells life insurance, and one of their sons has become an apprentice cook at a big Tokyo airport hotel. Another man has an office job in Sano, the bustling prefectural administrative center and market town twenty-five miles down the valley. One Shinohata woman earns "a man's wage" at construction; this enables her to support her husband, who does a bit of farming but who is chiefly preoccupied with nature study, an interest that he could formerly have indulged only at the price of extreme poverty. The forest, no longer combed day in and day out, has grown wilder. Bears and

boar have come back; a new niche has opened for them, too.

While all these changes were occurring, the fifth great force from the city, capital, was working its changes too. Politics in the township, says Dore, is mainly about roads, bridges, schools, and irrigation channels, "and the gentle art of getting central government subsidies for these things." The other significant infusions of city-derived capital have been The Factory's payment for land and a subsidy that the government builds into the price of rice, a subsidy ultimately paid by city consumers.

It is tempting to attribute Shinohata's economic transformations to the industriousness, intelligence, and resourcefulness of its people. But people in the transformed Shinohata are the first to admit that their forebears worked harder than they do. As for resourcefulness, it takes more of that to make straw raincoats, as the people of old Shinohata did, than to go to a store and buy rain gear, as Shinohatans do today. Considering how little they had to work with, the people of old Shinohata were unbelievably resourceful. Present-day Shinohatans are the "same" people, some of them literally the same individuals. What has changed is not their attributes as human beings but rather their circumstances: city markets, jobs, technology, transplants, and capital all came to bear upon Shinohata simultaneously, heavily, and in reasonable proportion to one another, thus shaping a new, well-rounded, and nonspecialized economy. The transformations are inexplicable in other terms.

WHY BACKWARD CITIES NEED ONE ANOTHER

THE SHAH OF IRAN WANTED AN ECONOMY LIKE America's, Japan's, and northern Europe's. He thought he could have it if he had the same kind of equipment they had. So he set about buying equipment, advised by people nicknamed "*masachusettsi*," meaning technocrats equipped with an education and outlook popularly associated in Iran with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where many of the Shah's economic and technical experts had indeed been trained. Iran entered into contracts with firms in Europe and Japan, as well as the United States, for fertilizer factories, cement plants, steel works, power plants, hospitals, automotive works, even entire agricultural villages. This expensive policy only reinforced Iran's dependence on oil sales, and did not help it become capable of producing its own tools and equipment.

The Shah was not the first autocratic ruler to think he could buy development in a big way. Early in the eighteenth century, Peter the Great tried to create a developed economy for Russia by buying producers' goods and expertise from Holland and other highly developed economies of the time. Assisted and advised by Western-trained ex-

perts, the *masachusettsi* of his day, Peter bought hundreds of facilities from Western Europe, ranging from iron foundries, canal locks, and ribbon factories to a model capital city, St. Petersburg, now Leningrad. Peter was much admired in Western Europe for his modernization of Russia, just as the Shah was admired in many circles for his modernization of Iran. Peter's money came from taxes, which fell mainly on the peasantry, since most of Russia's production was rural. In spite of all the money he spent, and all the trappings of progress he purchased, the Russian economy did not thereupon proceed to act like the economies that Peter was under the illusion he was duplicating. Like the Shah, he thought of development as a collection of things for producing, not as a process of change. The process itself was something he could not buy, nor could Western Europe sell it. Western Europe, engaged in the process, continued to develop economically in many-sided ways, while Russia, lacking complex city economies, continued stunted and stultified. Thus, in the years that followed Peter's purchases, the gap between the Western European economies and Russia's did not narrow, as Peter had anticipated, but widened.

DEVELOPMENT IS A DO-IT-YOURSELF PROCESS: FOR any economy it is either do it yourself or don't develop. All of today's highly developed economies were once backward, yet transcended that condition. Their accumulated experience demonstrates how the thing is actually done. Historically, we find two major patterns or motifs: the reliance of backward cities upon one another, and economic improvisation.

For new cities to arise and flourish, they must initially find markets for their work in already existing cities. Yet it is fatal for backward cities to confine themselves to that kind of trade, because such trade is only a springboard for entering into a different type of intercity trade: trade with cities in much the same stage of development as themselves. Backward cities must trade most heavily with other backward cities, or the gulf between what they import and what they can replace with their own production will be too great to be bridged.

In Europe, the development process was pioneered by Venice, which used its simple advanced-backward trade with Constantinople to launch itself into many new ventures. The creators of Venice, the Veneti, are now thought to have taken up life in the mud flats and marshes at the head of the Adriatic as a refuge from plunder and turmoil. Whatever the circumstances, by the sixth century there they were, and there they took to using the shallows of the sea to produce salt by evaporation. At first they probably produced it only for themselves; but salt was a valuable commodity, and a market for it existed in Constantinople, which was not only an imperial administrative center but also a major hub of trade and a major producer and distributor of city-made necessities and luxuries of the time. What the Veneti took in return for the salt we do not know—perhaps rugs, glassware, luxurious cloth, and jewels, goods we know later Venetians prized. Almost certainly they bought metal woodcutting tools, for these were essential to shipbuilding and to developing a subsequent major export to Constantinople—timber.

Venice, then, had these assets to start with: natural resources to sell, a distant city market to buy them, and hence a way of earning city-made imports from a more highly advanced economy. In sum, it had exactly what any region relying exclusively on the export of natural resources had then or has now.

Let us suppose that Venice had continued to concentrate on this simple, two-way trade with more-advanced Constantinople. In that case, Venice would not have developed its own city economy. Any crude city-made goods that Venice might have produced—imitations of Constantinople's least sophisticated products—would have been of no interest in Constantinople. Nor could Venice, in these circumstances, have replaced wide ranges of its imports from Constantinople with its own production. The gulf between most of what it could buy and what it could produce was too great. What Venice needed was a market for such city-

made goods as it could manage to produce. Only then could it start its development process.

Venice did indeed develop: by acting like Constantinople without Constantinople's economy. This may seem laughable, that a primitive little settlement of fishermen, salt evaporators, and loggers at the back of nowhere could start behaving like rich and mighty Constantinople at the very hub of things, but it did. The means Venice used was to launch itself into trade with other backward settlements in circumstances not too different from its own, settlements that needed whatever imitations of Constantinople's goods Venice was capable of producing. To those settlements, Venice was a small market for resource goods and raw materials, just as Constantinople was such a market to Venice.

Venice, in addition to selling simple (at this stage) craft goods of its own, could re-export some of the luxuries it obtained from Constantinople, customers for these being magnates in castles and manors of feudal Europe. In return for both kinds of products—its own and Constantinople's—Venice took such resource goods as leather, wool, tin, copper, furs, horn, amber, and iron, materials it could incorporate into its own slowly ramifying collection of manufactures.

It was all slow going. The backward economies Venice was dealing with were starting from almost nothing. Their harsh subsistence was periodically swept by horrifying famines and was so lacking in producers' goods that an iron plow, when it was to be found at all, was a treasure for a king's estate. Nevertheless, by using its trade with Constantinople as a springboard for trade with backward settlements, Venice, with a city economy that was expanding explosively for its times, by the tenth century became capable of sophisticated production in its own behalf and was the major market for European resource goods. As a shifting, expanding market, Venice had been transforming bits and pieces of Europe's stagnant subsistence economies into supply regions, just as Constantinople's market had earlier converted the subsistence life of the Veneti into a supply economy with a depot settlement that became Venice.

If the depot settlements in Europe had remained content with simple, two-way trade with Venice, they would have had only dead-end supply economies. Instead, they took to behaving like Venice. That is, using their Venetian trade as a springboard, they launched into trade with one another. Merchants in Antwerp, besides buying wool and channeling it to Venice, began producing cloth for export to backward London, Paris, and Genoa, and soon were trading all over Europe. To start with, London had little or nothing for Venice, because London's first export of any significance seems to have been salt fish, and, to jump ahead many centuries for an analogy, that would have been carrying coals to Newcastle. But there were other cities in the continent's interior, selling to Venice and to one another, that were solvent markets for London fish, and in

due course English wool destined for the looms of the Lowlands was also being channeled through London. London took to copying—that is, replacing—some of its imports; for example, at first it bought leather goods from Cordoba, as Venice also did, and then subsequently it made leather goods, first with Cordovan leather, then also with cheaper and coarser English leather. Although such items were probably of no interest in Venice, they were valued in London itself and in settlements not too different from London.

IF THESE SMALL, FRAGILE CITIES HAD MERELY PRODUCED exports for one another, they would have developed and expanded their economies very little. Collectively, they would have been like the fabled town in which people prosper by taking in one another's washing. The key to the strengthening and diversification of their economies was the fact that they repeatedly replaced, with their own production, imports from one another. They could do this as a practical matter because the gulf between what they were importing from neighbors and what they themselves could produce was not too great to be bridged. What one backward city can produce, another can likely reproduce.

Reciprocal import replacing stimulated markets for city-made innovations. When cities replace wide ranges of their imports with local production, they shift to importing other goods in place of those now locally produced. Up to this point, I have emphasized the shifts that create larger city markets for rural goods and resource raw materials. These shifts are important. But even more important, as far as the development of economic life is concerned, is the fact that cities replacing and shifting imports can afford new types of goods being produced in other cities. In this way import-replacing cities stimulate sales of new kinds of export work being cast up in other cities. This mechanism is the means by which streams of innovations are injected into everyday economic life. Then the imported innovations, in their turn, are replaced with local production, opening up the market for still more innovations.

What this means is that the trade among vigorously developing cities is volatile, continually changing in content as cities cast up new kinds of exports for one another and, in due course, replace many of them. So it was with the development of the backward cities of Europe. They were forever generating new exports for one another—bells, dyes, buckles, parchment, lace, carding combs, needles, painted cabinet work, ceramics, brushes, cutlery, paper, sieves, riddles, sweetmeats, elixirs, files, pitchforks, sextants—and then replacing them with local production, to become customers for still more innovations. They were developing on one another's shoulders.

To rulers like Peter the Great, and to his Soviet successors who want to know and control, as far as they can, what is going to be produced and where it is going to be

produced and how, five years in the future, and then five years beyond that, and so on, volatile intercity trade, forever unpredictably and opportunistically changing in content, represents sheer chaos. Of course it is not chaotic. It manifests a complex form of order, akin to organic forms of order typical of all living things, in which instabilities (in this case, funds of replaceable imports) build up and then corrections follow, both the instabilities and the corrections being the stuff of life processes.

The developmental process of Europe was recapitulated, much more rapidly, in the northern part of the United States, beginning tentatively and spottily during colonial times and then intensifying rapidly after the American Revolution. First came the springboard: the simple two-way trade between American resource depots and much more highly advanced cities in Europe. Boston, which started by exporting timber, in the form of clapboards, and fish, and Philadelphia, which exported grain, were the first American cities to start wriggling out of this dead-end form of trade. Even as colonial cities they began trying to behave like the cities of Europe. In contrast to Boston and Philadelphia, New York was economically docile in the colonial era. Immediately following the Revolution, however, New York was drawn fully into the little network of volatile intercity trade that had been pioneered in Boston and Philadelphia. New York's post-revolutionary economy proved so hospitable to entrepreneurs generating exports for other backward cities, and replacing imports from them, that in little more than a generation the city had developed a greater diversity of manufactures than either Boston or Philadelphia, and soon it developed a greater volume, as well. As new cities, such as Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Chicago, formed, they entered the network of volatile trade. When the discovery of gold in California resulted in the founding of San Francisco, it behaved like the cities of Europe and the northern United States. Loosely speaking, it played the economic role of Venice in the American Far West, much as Boston and Philadelphia had played that role in the East.

In the southern part of the United States, cities behaved differently. Charleston, Savannah, Richmond, St. Augustine, and Williamsburg, rather than concentrating upon trade with one another, confined themselves for the most part to simple, two-way, dead-end trade, first with much more highly advanced European cities, and later with more highly advanced cities of the American North as well. They exported agricultural cash crops, received in return manufactured city goods, and failed to use this trade as a springboard to launch themselves into volatile trade with one another. Consequently, they did not develop their own economies.

Backward cities need one another. When Japan began developing its modern economy, in the 1870s, Japanese cities behaved like those of Europe and the American North. They used their international trade in silk as a springboard for ramifying trade with one another. Tokyo

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played the role of Venice. Instead of remaining content with what its silk exports would buy from more highly advanced economies, it copied such imports as it could and exported them to other Japanese cities, which in turn replaced many of Tokyo's new exports to them with their own production and also developed new exports to sell to Tokyo. From the very beginning of Japan's modern development, trade among its cities in products new to Japan was far more intensively pursued than foreign trade was. This remains true. Exported Japanese robot tools, for example, were first developed for producers in Japan. This is a pattern of development that Japan has used consistently, beginning with its first imitations of Western goods; just so, today a highly developed Japan is its own first and best customer for innovations.

Hong Kong only two generations ago was an economically limited colonial depot city. While it is still a colony in name, economically it is anything but. It has played the role of Venice on the Pacific Rim, exporting its producers' goods and services to Singapore, Seoul, and Taipei, and in return buying products of cheap labor to incorporate into its own domestic and export products. But the Pacific Rim cities, like the cities of Europe, have not been content with simple, two-way trade, whether with Hong Kong or with other more highly developed cities, and have concentrated heavily on trade both with one another and with still more backward settlements.

Economic development in the United States was rapid in comparison with that in Europe. Japan's modern development occurred more rapidly still, and that of the Pacific Rim has been, so far, most rapid of all. This suggests that some, perhaps many, currently backward economies could develop rapidly indeed if their cities were to use trade with more advanced economies only as a springboard for volatile trade with one another. But that process, the actual process of developing, is thwarted when backward cities or their nations instead try to rely upon two-way trade with more advanced economies, whether by attempting to buy development or by seeking to acquire development on credit or through gifts.

THE SECOND MAJOR MOTIF TO BE FOUND HISTORICALLY in the development of backward economic life is improvisation.

Backward cities that actually have developed have improvised means of producing even outright imitations of imported goods. An example is the fashion in which enterprises in Tokyo at the turn of the century began to manufacture bicycles. Japan not only learned to make bicycles as it went along, and developed its own producers' goods for the purpose, but also learned a method for reproducing other types of complex imported goods in symbiotic groups of individually small and simple factories. This method was put to use for manufacturing sewing machines, for example, and, later, radios and electrical goods. A modern de-

rivative of the system, used by the great Nissan automobile works, with its clusters of suppliers who make daily and even hourly deliveries, has recently become the subject of much study and admiration on the part of American industrialists. At the time the Japanese developed their own bicycle and sewing-machine manufacturing, the machines they imported were being made in highly integrated, huge factories in America. Had the Japanese tried to import complete bicycle and sewing-machine factories, they would have lost the opportunity of developing their own producers' goods and production methods, and the bicycles and sewing machines would have been more expensive as well, probably too expensive for Japanese consumers to buy.

The backward cities of medieval Europe had to improvise, because they had little choice. Backward cities today must improvise just as surely, for they have to cut costs below those of more advanced economies. To put it another way, they have to bring the prices of what they make within the range of what their own people and enterprises—and the people and enterprises of other backward cities—can afford. One advantage they usually have is cheap labor, but this is of practical significance only in cases where labor-intensive methods of production can be improvised as economical substitutes for the capital-intensive methods used by more highly advanced economies. The small size of enterprises like the Japanese bicycle-parts makers is an asset because smallness cuts down administrative and other overhead costs both in individual enterprises and in the aggregate, in comparison with the overhead costs of large operations. The improvisation of materials often cuts costs by putting to use what is at hand or can be gotten cheaply, rather than slavishly duplicating the materials richer and more advanced economies happen to be using. The craftsmen of medieval London were improvising when they began using British leather to imitate objects of finer Cordovan leather. So were enterprises in Hong Kong when they manufactured cloth shoes in styles imitating leather shoes.

Apart from the direct practical advantages of improvisation, the practice fosters a state of mind essential to all economic development, no matter what stage the development has reached. Improvising, in itself, fosters delight in pulling off the feat and, more important, faith in the idea that if one improvisation doesn't work out, another can likely be found that will. Practical problem-solving, improvisation, and innovation are all part and parcel of one another. To go back to the example of the bicycle, the many improvements embraced in Europe and America that made it a practical vehicle, rather than merely an awkward toy or clumsy curiosity, consisted of a long, long series of improvisations, each added to imitations of what had already been achieved. Manufacturers and tinkerers, using the means at their command in their own economies, came up with ball bearings, roller bearings, pneumatic tires, chain-and-sprocket drives, differential gears, tubular metal frames in place of solid metal frames, caliper brakes,

brake cables, drum brakes, and back-pedaling brakes. They even partially reinvented the wheel itself, gaining unprecedented lightness, strength, and economy of materials from an unprecedented asymmetrical spoking of the wheel.

All the improvisations developed for the bicycle turned out to have ramifying uses. They underlie, in good part, the development of tractors, automobiles, and airplanes, as well as of the more obvious motorcycles and mopeds. Bicycle improvisations formed new markets for new types of lubricants and steel alloys, which also had many other uses. Innovations are inherently improvisational, as all of us know who held our breaths wondering if the ceramic tiles improvised for the space shuttle would do their job and not fall off. All innovations, all new ways of economizing on materials, including energy, are inescapably masses of improvisations and experiments, some successful and some not, added to what has already been achieved.

At a given time, the more that economic life in general has developed, however, the better for backward cities seeking to develop through volatile trade with one another. They have a flying start. The Tokyo bicycle-parts makers and assemblers, despite the fact that they had to improvise methods of production, did not have to invent the bicycle. This principle is the chief reason why there has been a speed-up in the development of backward cities between the time of Venice and the time of Hong Kong.

If one wanted to define economic development in a single word, that word would be "improvisation." But infeasible improvisation is fruitless, so it would be more accurate to say that development is continual improvisation in a context that makes injecting improvisations into everyday economic life feasible. Cities in volatile trade with one another provide that context. Nothing else does, which is why backward cities need one another.

HOW NATIONAL CURRENCIES STIFLE CITIES

WE MUST SUPPOSE THAT THE VERY EARLIEST proto-cities and cities, trading with one another in prehistoric times, bartered the obsidian, copper, shells, animals, horn, pigments, rushes, or other goods of their territories. Unmediated by currency, the value of bartered goods would have fluctuated sensitively. An item in high demand would have commanded a lot of imports, but if demand fell off, as additional sources of supply or substitutes were found, the superseded product would have commanded fewer imports, just as a falling currency does. Then the settlement exporting it would have been in trouble, unless it hustled up something else worth trading or imitated some of the artifacts it had formerly imported—a process we call "economic borrowing" when we find evidence of it in ancient times.

When cities invented currencies, at first each had its own; at any rate, the very early city-states of which we have knowledge, in Mediterranean Europe, the Near East, China, and India, created their own currencies and circulated them in trade. After an ancient city-state had been conquered by a more powerful neighbor and thus converted to a provincial city, or after it had voluntarily surrendered much of its sovereignty to a federation, it typically continued, nevertheless, to mint and circulate a currency of its own. Even the Roman Empire only gradually eliminated the non-Roman currencies of its conquered provinces and dependencies, and it wasn't until later, in an unsuccessful effort to combat inflation at the time of Diocletian, that Rome decreed standardized prices, which is to say rigidly standardized currency values, throughout its realm.

In early medieval Europe, city currencies once again became the norm. Venice welcomed and used imperial Byzantine coinage because of its trade with the Eastern Em-

pire, but circulated its own currency as well. The cities that rose in the wake of Venice and extended their own trading networks generally created their own currencies.

Medieval city currencies of Europe persisted into Renaissance times, and indeed multiplied, as European economic life developed with the multiplying of cities. Even currencies that did not originate in cities proper, such as Florence, Genoa, or Amsterdam, must often have worked much as if they were the currencies of city-states, because the principalities doing the minting were often quite small. For instance, the currency of Brandenburg was the currency of Berlin, that of Saxony the currency of Dresden, that of the Dukedom of Milan the currency of Milan, and so on. Many such currencies persisted even into recent times. German monetary union was not instituted until 1857, as a precursor to the formation of the German Empire. Except during one brief and ill-fated experience with centralized government, inspired by the French Revolution, Swiss cities, as cantons, retained the power to create their own currencies until after 1848.

Today we take it for granted that the elimination of multitudinous currencies in favor of fewer national or imperial currencies represents economic progress and promotes the stability of economic life. But this conventional belief is at least worth questioning in view of the function that currencies serve as economic feedback controls. I am going to argue that national or imperial currencies give faulty and destructive feedback to city economies and this in turn leads to profound structural flaws in those economies, some of which we cannot overcome no matter how hard we try.

As we all know, when a nation's currency declines in value relative to those of other nations with which it trades, theoretically the very decline ought to help correct the na-

tion's economy. Its exports automatically become cheaper to customer nations, and so its export sales should increase; at the same time, its imports automatically become more expensive, and this should help its own manufacturers. Theoretically, then, a decline in the value of a national currency ought to work like both an export subsidy and a tariff, coming into play precisely when a nation begins to run a deficit in its international balance of payments because it is exporting too little and importing too much. Furthermore, this automatic export subsidy and tariff ought to remain in play precisely as long as it is needed, no longer. If that were indeed the effect that national-currency fluctuations had, they would be elegant examples of control through feedback, registering that a correction was necessary and, at the same time, triggering the appropriate correction.

To understand why national currencies don't actually perform that constructive function, we need to understand how feedback controls work. First of all, it is essential that the feedback information govern a responding mechanism. For example, in our breathing, a momentary rise in the level of carbon dioxide in the bloodstream automatically triggers the brainstem's breathing center, which shoots a message to the diaphragm to contract and allow the lungs to fill again. In this case, the triggering information is the amount of carbon dioxide in the blood, and the responding mechanism is the diaphragm. As organisms, we depend on vast arrays of feedback controls, all of them working so appropriately and automatically that we are unaware we have them until researchers tell us we do.

When new enterprises in a city multiply and diversify rapidly, the information feeds back in the form of crowding, inconvenience, and increasing competition for city space, and it triggers the appropriate correction: some enterprises move out of the city into the region, still within reach of the city services and markets they require. Similarly, when city jobs and the city's demands upon its region for rural goods increase, this information feeds back into the system in the form of labor shortages in the city's hinterland. That triggers the appropriate corrections: the use and, if need be, the development of rural labor-saving equipment. City regions are the outcomes of many different corrections triggered by many different inputs of feedback information. To be sure, the corrections are not wholly automatic, but then neither is our breathing. We can hold our breath—within limits.

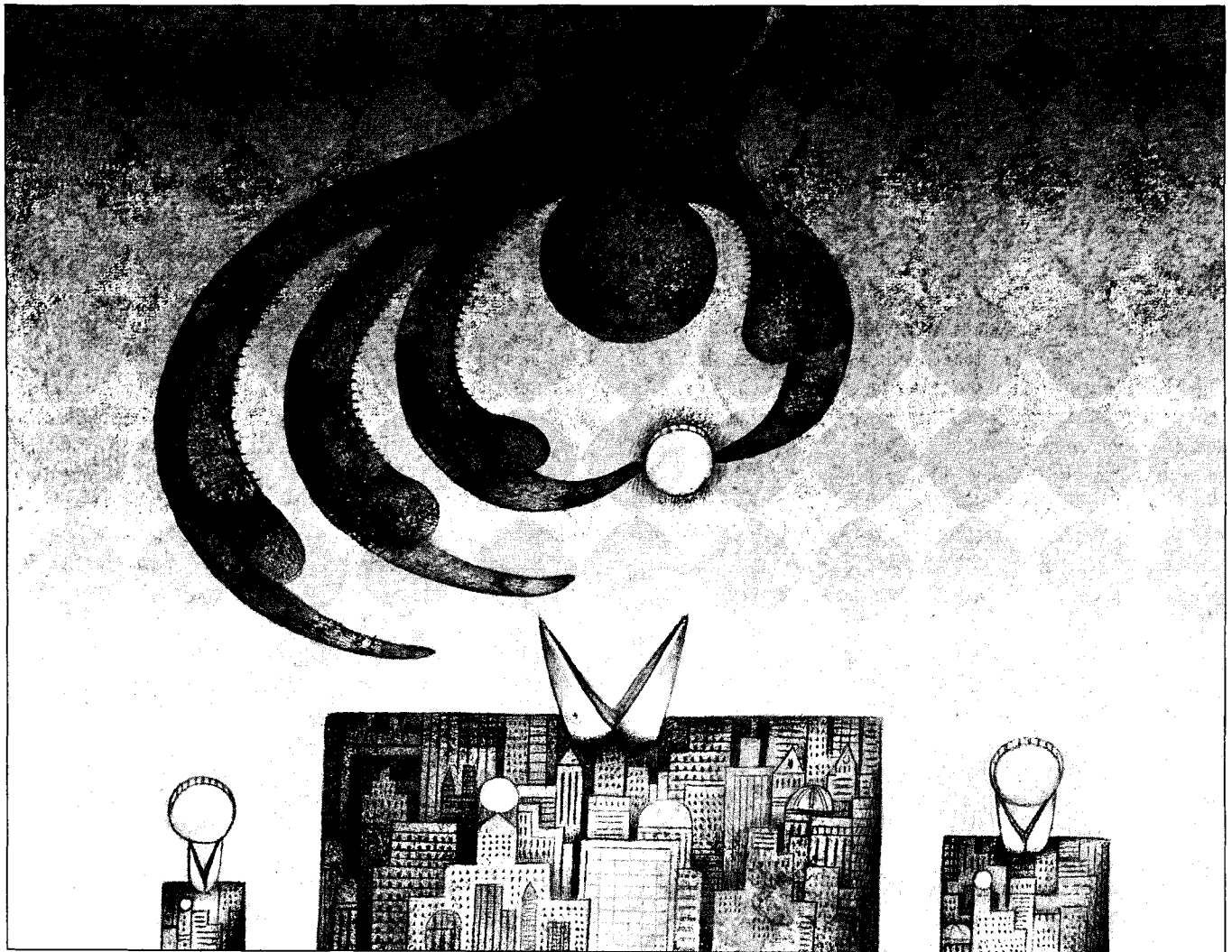
Feedback controls always work on their own terms. For example, when a government prints money exuberantly, the information feeds back into the system and triggers the appropriate correction: a given unit of money buys less. Wishes for a different correction—economic expansion—don't avail; expansion is a different response to different stimuli, under quite different controls. By analogy, the common thermostat works beautifully at its task of registering changes in temperature and triggering the appropriate corrections, but it is futile to wish that it would

govern the speed of a rotary mill; however, a different feedback control does exactly that. In short, feedback controls are built into the systems they correct and the corrections they trigger are not discretionary. They are precisely to the point, and the point is always the specific correction of results of specific happenings.

The trouble with national currencies as constructive feedback controls is not that they are feeble at their job. They are anything but that. Those dreary little columns of international exchange-rate figures in the back pages of newspapers, creeping from day to day in this direction or that by little fractions of percentage points, can represent the power of life or death over entire industries. A gradual 10 percent rise in the value of the English pound in 1979 and 1980 forced the major producers of English china and earthenware to lay off workers, and put several of the smaller producers out of business altogether, because they were priced out of foreign markets that until then had remained strong for these wares. The rising pound was simultaneously pricing the wares out of their domestic markets, too, as foreign imports became cheaper. The chairman of the largest producer, Wedgwood, blamed the rise of the pound on a combination of North Sea oil production off Scotland, which had improved Great Britain's balance of trade, and the government's policy of setting interest rates high in order to attract foreign capital. He was probably right.

CURRENCIES ARE POWERFUL CARRIERS OF FEED-back information, then, and potent triggers of adjustments, but on their own terms. A national currency registers, above all, consolidated information on a nation's international trade. When net international exports of goods or services rise, relative to those of other nations, the currency, being in demand, rises in value; when exports fall off, it declines in value. International imports and exports of capital work in just the opposite way. If a country has been importing more capital than it has exported (by borrowing abroad, for example), the value of its currency is automatically bolstered. Conversely, if it has exported more capital than it has been importing (by lending, making gifts, paying interest on prior foreign loans, or exporting the profits of foreign-owned industries), the value of its currency is automatically depressed to that extent.

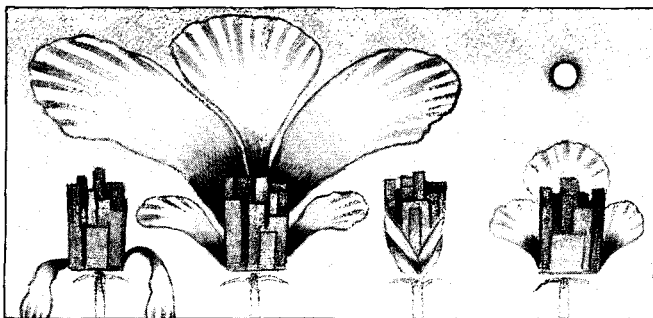
The reverse effects of movements of capital do not long outweigh the effects of international trade in goods and services. The latter factor dominates over the long term. For example, suppose a nation borrows heavily abroad to develop its economy. Its currency's value is automatically bolstered from the very fact of the borrowing. But then suppose that the development schemes do not pay off in expanded international exports of goods and services or in replaced foreign imports. The value of the currency must then decline. The cost of interest on the loan, which



seemed so feasible when the loan was bolstering the debtor nation's currency, becomes devastating as the currency declines. That is why heavy international borrowing that does not pay off in a greatly improved balance of trade for the debtor nation can abruptly bankrupt a country unless the lenders agree to keep lending to it and to ease terms of repayment and interest. The threat then, of course, becomes bankruptcy of the lenders.

Because currency feedback information is so potent, and because the information is so often not what governments want to hear, nations commonly go to extravagant lengths to try to block or resist the information. Furthermore, when the information does come through—as, sooner or later, it always does, no matter what the evasions—the effects can be inappropriate, to say the least, as they were in the English Midlands, where most of the nation's potteries are located. Unemployment was already high in Britain generally and very high in the Midlands; the country was suffering from declining exports of its manufactures, and had been for decades. But those realities were overridden by the realities of the North Sea oil and the imports of foreign capital.

National currencies, to sum up, give potent feedback but are impotent at triggering appropriate corrections. To picture how such a thing can be, imagine a group of people who are all properly equipped with diaphragms and lungs but who share among them only one brainstem breathing center. In this goofy arrangement, the breathing center would receive consolidated feedback on the carbon-dioxide level of the whole group and would be unable to discriminate among the individuals producing it. Everybody's diaphragm would be triggered to contract at the same time. But suppose some of those people were sleeping while others were playing tennis. Suppose some were reading about feedback controls while others were chopping wood. Some would have to stop what they were doing and subside into a lower level of activity. Worse yet, suppose some were swimming and diving, and for some reason, such as the breaking of the surf, had no control over when they were submerged. Imagine what would happen to them. In such an arrangement, the feedback control would be working perfectly on its own terms but the results would be wretched, because of a flaw designed right into the system.



I HAVE HAD TO USE A PREPOSTEROUS EXAMPLE BECAUSE systems as structurally flawed as this don't exist in nature; they wouldn't last. Nor do they exist in the machines we design to incorporate mechanical, chemical, or electronic feedback controls; machines this badly conceived wouldn't work. Nations, from this point of view, don't work either, yet they exist.

Nations are flawed in this way because they are not discrete economic units, although we pretend that they are and compile statistics about them based on that premise. Nations include, among other things in their economic grab bags, differing city economies, which need different corrections at given times; yet those economies share a currency that gives all of them the same information at a given time. The consolidated information is not specific to them even with respect to their foreign trade, and it is no information at all with respect to their trade with one another. Yet this wretched feedback is powerful stuff.

Because currency feedback, at bottom, has to do with imports and exports and the balance or lack of balance between them, the appropriate responding mechanisms for such information are cities and their regions. Cities are the specific economic units that can replace imports with their own production, and the specific units that cast up streams of new kinds of exports. It is bootless to suppose that amorphous, undifferentiated statistical collections of a nation's economies will perform those functions; they won't.

Ideally, at a time when a city's exports are doing well, the city needs to receive as wide a range and as great a volume of earned imports as it can, especially from other cities, because those funds of earned imports are the grist that a city must have for its vital process of import replacing. Conversely, at a time when its exports are in decline, imports should ideally become expensive, because to escape decline from diminishing export work a city desperately needs to replace wide ranges of its imports with locally produced goods. It also needs to be stimulated to develop new kinds of export work. In other words, with falling exports, a city needs a declining currency working like a tariff and an export subsidy—but only for as long as it is necessary. Once its exports are doing well, it needs a rising currency, to earn the greatest variety and quantity of imports it can. Individual city currencies serve as elegant feedback controls because they trigger appropriate corrections to specific responding mechanisms.

This is a built-in design advantage that many cities had in the past but that almost none have now. Singapore and Hong Kong, which are oddities today, have their own currencies and so possess this advantage. They have no need of tariffs or export subsidies. Their currencies serve those functions when needed and only for as long as needed. Detroit, on the other hand, has no such advantage. When its export work first began to decline, it got no feedback. Detroit merely declined, uncorrected.

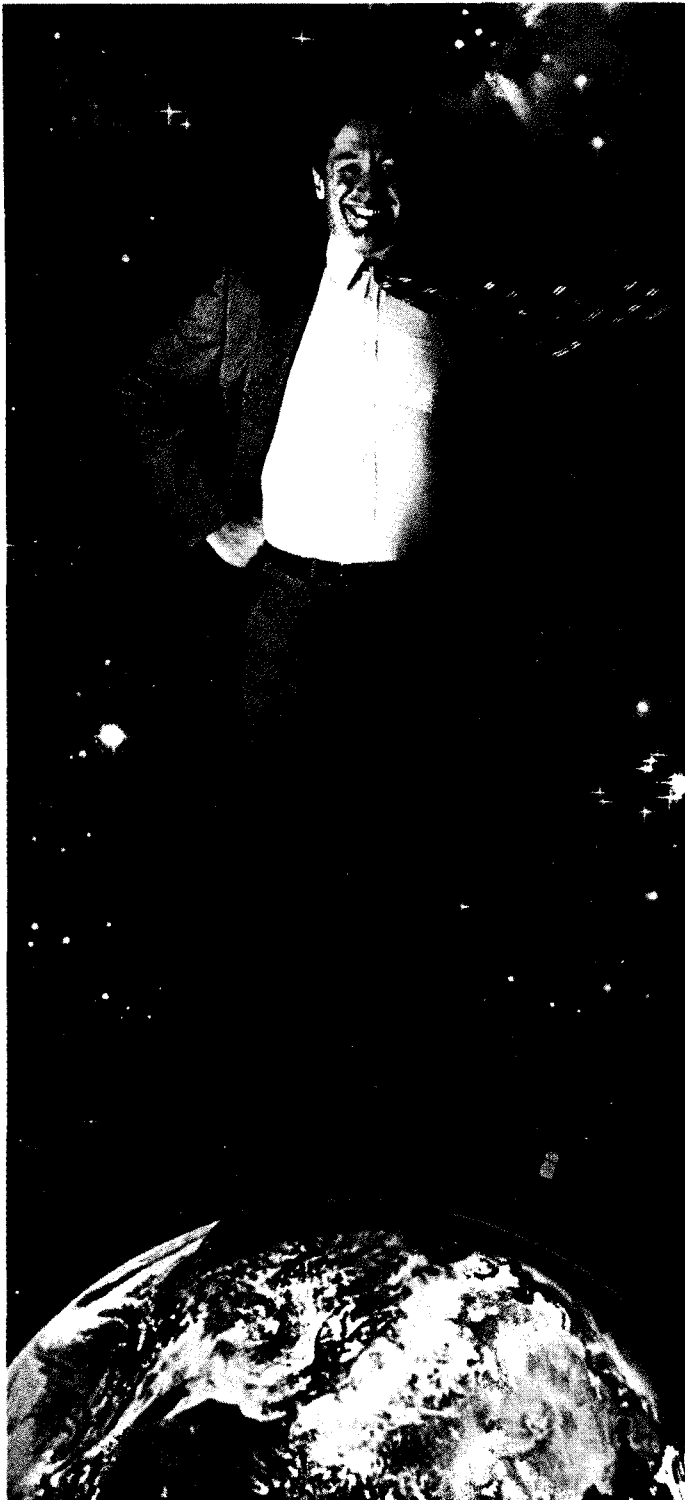
The flawed and inappropriate feedback cities get from consolidated national currencies works itself out in different ways, depending upon the international trade of their countries as a whole.

If a nation's international trade is predominantly in rural or resource goods, those exports and the feedback information they bring in contradict the realities of city trade and production. Uruguay and its chief city, Montevideo, are an example. The international value of Uruguay's currency during the formative period of that nation's economy rested wholly on the country's exports of meat, wool, leather, and a few other rurally produced goods. Since Uruguay did well with these foreign exports, foreign imports were relatively cheap, with the result that Montevideo did not take to replacing wide ranges of the plentiful imports with its own production. The more Uruguay's currency rose in purchasing power as the nation's international trade in rural goods built up, the cheaper the foreign imports became. In short, Montevideo was getting potent information on the state of Uruguay's international trade, which is all a national currency can convey. But Montevideo was not getting feedback on its own trade. Montevideo was not producing those exports nor earning those imports but was living on the country's rural work.

When Uruguay's foreign markets declined, beginning in the 1950s, Uruguay's currency inexorably began to decline in relative value. For a time the government bolstered the currency by borrowing, with the result that imports kept flowing in during the 1960s, but this couldn't last, because the projects for which the government borrowed were not, in fact, reversing the decline in the country's balance of trade. Finally, the feedback from the falling currency came in loud, clear, and unmistakable: Uruguay, you aren't producing enough salable exports. You can't continue buying all those imports.

At long last, Montevideo itself was getting accurate feedback about its own economy, which had never been creative or productive. But by the time the message came through, it was too late to be helpful. Montevideo could not respond appropriately. Its capacity to respond was atrophied. During all those years when the city had been living off the nation's rural earnings, it had failed to build up its own capacity to produce, so it had no foundation of producers' goods and services, no foundation of skills, none of the versatility at producing that it would have had to have in order to take advantage of the automatic tariff and export subsidy with which it was being presented.

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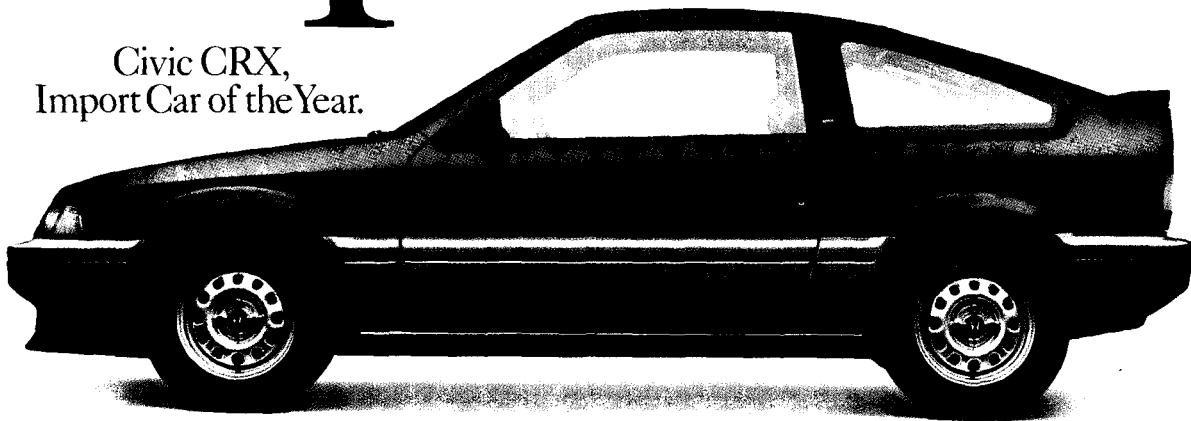


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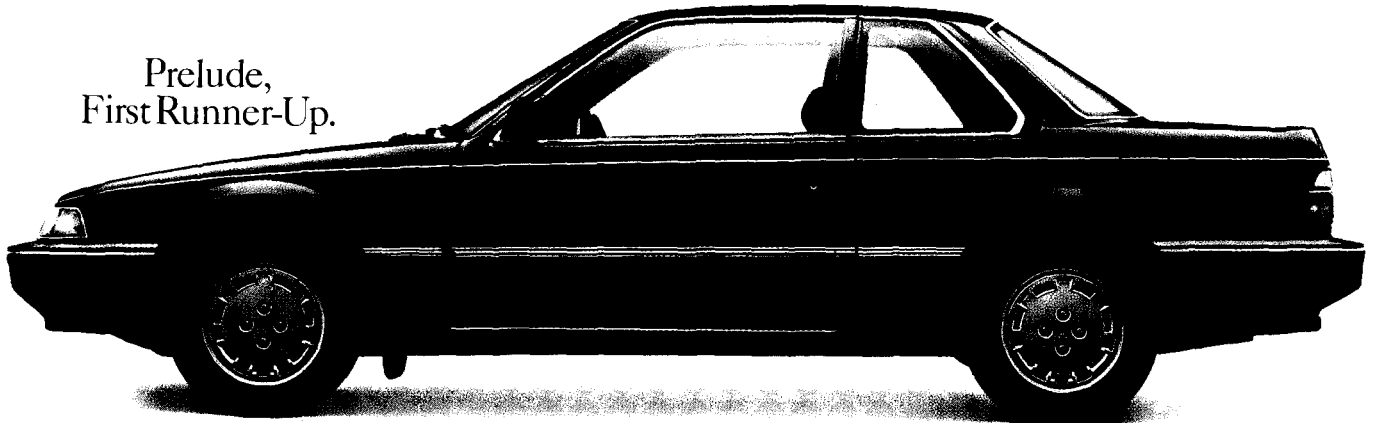
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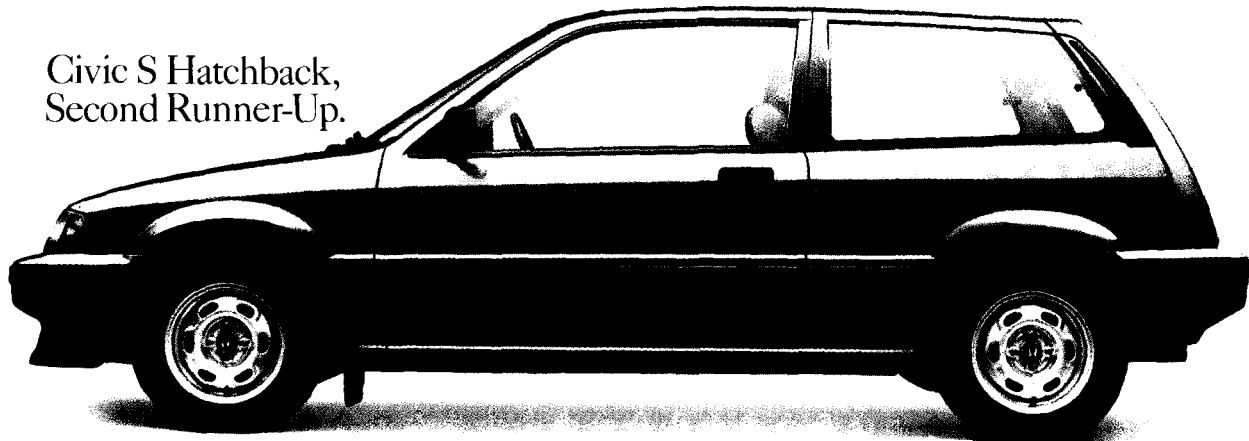
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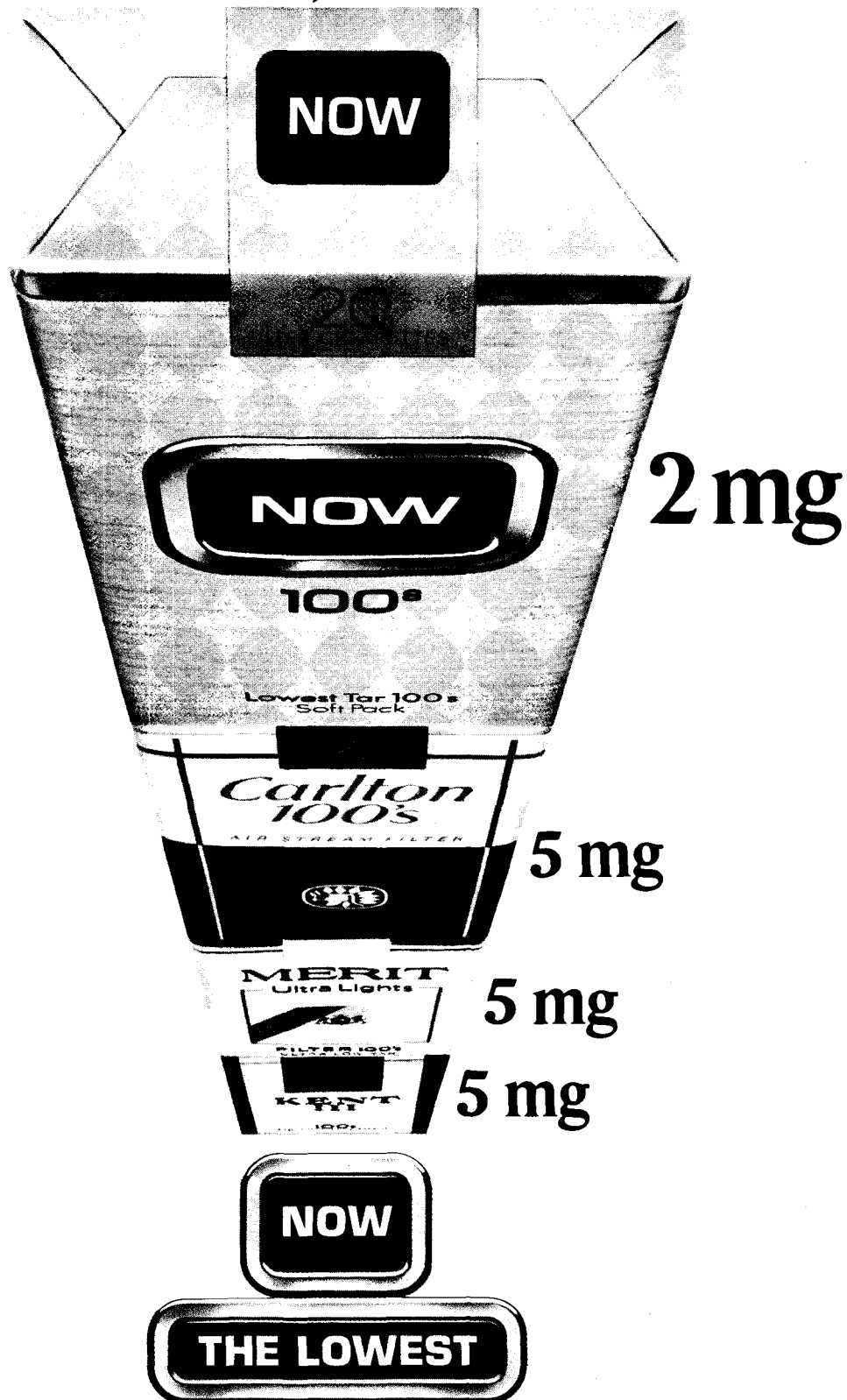
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CURRENCY FEEDBACK THAT ERRONEOUSLY TELLS A city that its export trade is in fine shape, as Uruguay's currency erroneously had told Montevideo, need not always be fatal. Such erroneous feedback can sometimes be corrected with tariffs, which is how the young United States, for example, evaded the consequences of faulty feedback to its young cities.

When the American Colonies won their independence, and for almost a century afterward, the international trade of the United States was overwhelmingly rural—as Uruguay's later trade would be. The southern part of the country contributed most heavily to this trade with its valuable tobacco and indigo and, later, cotton. In the North, as well, international exports were primarily natural resources and agricultural goods: fur, fish, timber, grain. The exports that the little northern cities produced for one another were useless in foreign trade, because they included nothing that European cities didn't already make themselves more cheaply. Indeed, foreign-manufactured imports, all earned by the rural exports of the country, were for the most part too cheap for American cities to replace with their own production, thanks to the high value of the country's currency. That doesn't mean that they were so cheap that all Americans could afford them, but that they were cheaper than the same things produced domestically. Imports would remain relatively cheap and plentiful unless American exports fell drastically in value and volume, and, just as in Uruguay, that couldn't happen so long as the nation's international trade in rural exports held up. Meanwhile, imports were coming in, not earned by city production and serving to deaden city production. The little American cities had quickly reached an economic impasse.

The situation was thought of not as a feedback flaw, which it was, but as the plight of American manufacturing. However, the response was germane, because it countermanded the feedback American cities were receiving. In 1816, the federal government enacted the first of many tariff measures intended not to raise revenue, like the country's earlier customs duties, but specifically to make manufactured imports artificially expensive. In effect, the tariffs told city people and producers: You aren't producing exports, and so you can't afford all these imports you aren't earning. The tariffs worked. The fact that foreign-manufactured goods were now less affordable than domestic equivalents stimulated import replacing in the cities, and their economies developed very rapidly instead of living, at one remove, off the earnings of the rural supply economies of the country.

Unfortunately, when the currency feedback was countermanded, it had to be countermanded for all the country's economies, rural as well as urban. In the South, where cities had not become productive, the tariffs simply drove up the cost of living without producing the economic benefits that they did in the North. The South's rural producers were being robbed of the cheap imports they had actually earned; in effect, they were victimized to subsi-

dize city production. So bitterly was this resented in the South that tariffs were one of the causes of the South's attempted secession from the Union in 1861 and the four-year slaughter that followed.

We may wonder why southern cities didn't respond to the tariffs constructively, the way northern cities did. At the time the tariffs were instituted, southern cities were backward relative to northern cities, and thus if they were to have been helped they would have needed protection against competition from northern manufacturers, much as northern manufacturers needed protection against competition from European manufacturers. Perhaps, had the South not been militarily defeated when it attempted independence, it would later have raised tariff barriers against the North and in this way, perhaps, encouraged its own city economies.

Southern cities were more backward than northern ones in 1816, when tariffs came into play, because they had not begun generating such exports as they technically and economically could for one another, and therefore had not started up the little networks of volatile intercity trade to be found in the North. Why the difference? Here I am conjecturing, but it may have been because the southern trade in tobacco and indigo had become so successful so soon. In the North, the poorer foreign earnings of the rural economies may have played a part in inspiring Boston and Philadelphia to improvise supplements to the rural economies upon which they drew. Whatever the reason, Boston, Philadelphia, and the other northern cities with which they traded took advantage of the countermanded feedback in a fashion that Charleston and Richmond did not.

Japan, at the time it began developing its modern economy, evaded the city-deadening consequences of the feedback from its currency in much the same fashion as the United States had done earlier. The Japanese bicycle-parts producers and assemblers I have previously mentioned were ingenious at cutting costs, and in the process they supported the development of Japanese producers' goods, but they were also getting help, probably indispensable help, from tariffs.

SWEDEN IS AN EXAMPLE OF A SMALL NATION THAT used tariffs to countermand the faulty feedback of its currency. At the time Swedish tariffs were instituted, about a century ago, the country was an important international exporter of timber, fish, and ore, but was relatively poor and backward compared with much of Europe, whose volatile intercity trade Sweden was slow to enter. Swedish tariffs were wide-ranging and stiff, and were even applied (in part out of political pique) against the few Norwegian manufactures of the time, mostly produced in the little city of Bergen. Norway was then under Swedish rule, and the tariffs directed against its manufactures ultimately led to its secession, in 1905.

Many countries whose cities are automatically deadened by the inappropriate feedback they get from rural-based or resource-based currency values are former colonies—but by no means all of them are. Some, like Portugal and Turkey, are decadent, poverty-stricken seats of former empires—but not all are poor. The oil-producing nations that are economically backward all have cities afflicted by inappropriate feedback. The way the Shah attempted to overcome Iran's backwardness, by buying the artifacts of development, was futile—but relying upon indigenous development combined with free trade would also have been futile.

Tariffs, necessary though they are in nations with undeveloped or long-stagnant cities and appreciable international trade in resources or rural products, are far from an ideal remedy for faulty and deadening feedback to cities. Tariffs create obstacles of their own to volatile intercity trade. They are particularly hazardous for small countries, because the cities of small nations need heavy and volatile trade with cities across national boundaries, and tariffs invite retaliatory barriers. And, in large nations or small, tariffs victimize rural economies. In Canada, most international exports are agricultural or resource goods, and on this trade rests the international exchange value of Canada's currency. The city benefiting most from Canadian tariffs is Toronto, and, naturally, it is hated by Canadians in the supply regions of the country. They call it Hogtown and see national tariff policies as something rigged to drive up their own costs of living for the benefit of Toronto. They are right, and yet Canada would be an extremely poor and backward country without tariff protection.

Singapore as a British-ruled colonial city was backward. It might well have continued to be handicapped after its nation, the Federated Malay States, gained independence in 1963, because the country's international exports were primarily rural and resource products, such as tin and rubber. However, in 1965 Singapore, with its predominantly Chinese population, was expelled from Malaysia, as the country is now called, because in the eyes of the mostly rural Malay population of the other parts of the country Singapore was an undesirable foreign body.

As a sovereign and independent city-state, Singapore has a currency that reflects its own trade situation. Furthermore, with its expulsion, the anomaly of a shared national "brainstem" vanished. Singapore doesn't need to cheat the rural Malays of their rightful import earnings for the sake of its own development; but neither is it deadened by inappropriate feedback from a generalized Malaysian currency. Singapore has to earn its own imports, or it won't have them, and to generate its own exports, or it won't have them. Appropriate feedback helps it to do both and to replace imports as well. In feedback terms, Singapore is a nice, well-made piece of equipment, with a mechanism (its currency) to carry information and trigger responses, and a mechanism to respond (its capacity to produce), forming a sensitive, self-correcting economic

unit. Hong Kong is another such unit. And Taiwan and South Korea are not badly off either, in the terms that I have been discussing, since their international trade does not consist chiefly of rural or resource-based exports. Thus these Pacific Rim economies have built-in advantages lacking in most economies that attempt to develop.

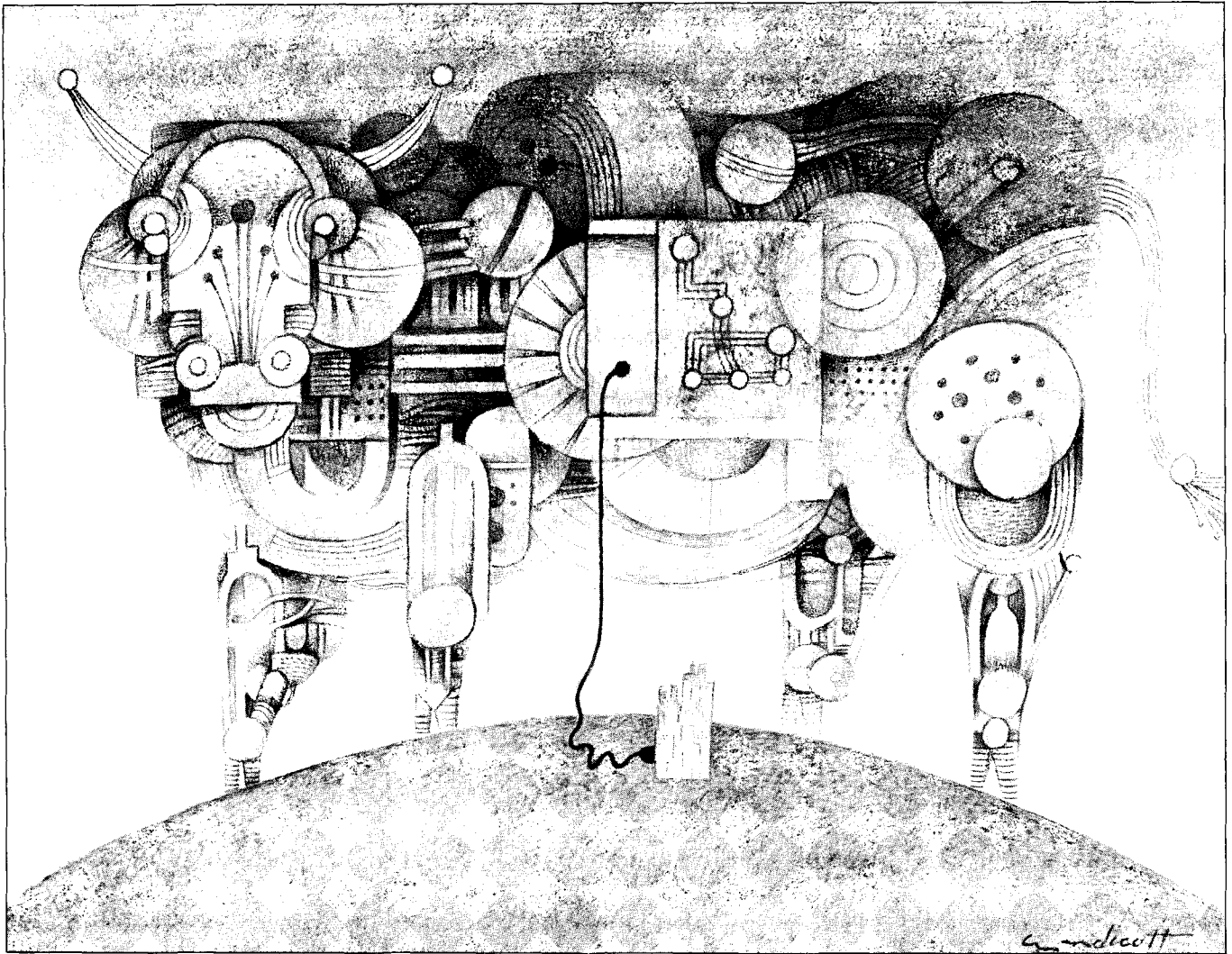
The fact that city-state currencies have often prevailed when major development has been getting under way suggests that national currencies may be fatally premature in some parts of the world now. South America comes to mind. To be sure, the emergence of sovereign city-states in South America, at the expense of existing national arrangements, is wildly unlikely. But it is also wildly unlikely that the nations of South America will achieve solid economic development or self-correcting economic stability.

Once a nation has managed to develop vigorous city economies, or has acquired them in the course of political consolidation or military conquest, troubles with faulty feedback are not over but merely take other forms. For these difficulties, not even makeshift remedies such as tariffs are available. Countries with such troubles must simply live with them and ultimately decay and die with them.

ONE MIGHT SUPPOSE, OFFHAND, THAT THE CURRENCY of a country that enjoys a big international trade in city-made exports, as opposed to rural or resource goods, would be a currency helpful to all the different cities in the country. But, unfortunately, it doesn't work that way, because of the very fact that the cities are different. Cities have their own individual timing for replacing imports and also for generating innovative exports. To experience a significant episode of import replacing, by definition a city must first build up a critical unstable mass of potentially replaceable imports. The cycle of a vigorous city, one that maintains its vitality generation after generation, seems to run like this: first comes a period in which it generates diverse exports, in the process earning an increasing diversity and volume of imports; second, as export generating dies down, a significant explosion of import replacing (provided a critical mass of replaceable imports has piled up—otherwise there is merely a decline); third, a period in which potential new exports, often incorporating innovations, are generated in the city's now greatly enlarged and diversified internal economy; fourth, a period of vigorous export generating and of earning wide ranges and great volumes of new replaceable imports—in other words, a return to the first phase of the cycle and a preparation for repeating the second phase.

In some cities, at some times, the phases follow each other very rapidly; in others the changes occur slowly; but, rapid or slow, this is the cycle that keeps their economies going.

The cycles of cities in volatile trade with one another do



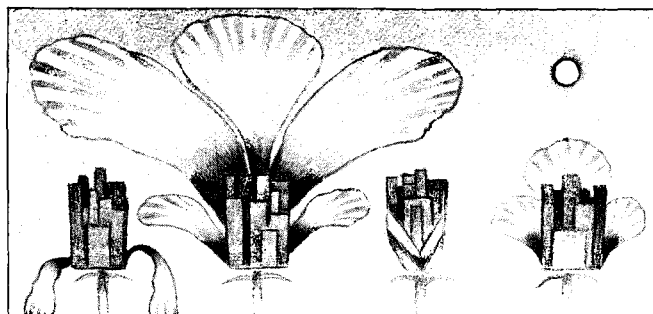
not correspond; rather they intersect constructively at their different phases. If all the cities of a large nation engaged simultaneously in explosions of import replacing, the joint economic boom would be horrendous, frantic, and probably so impractical that it would choke itself off from lack of materials, workers, and sheer time to solve practical problems before they became overwhelming. But, in any case, such an unbalanced, simultaneous expansion can hardly happen, because cities tend to require differing phases of one another's cycles. A city generating unprecedented exports needs customer cities that are replacing imports and therefore shifting to new import purchases, because those cities can afford innovative goods and are the best initial customers for such goods. Cities just getting started have historically often depended for their chance at life upon older cities replacing imports and shifting their purchases to exotic new goods or to rural supplies.

Now let us return to the goofy arrangement of different individuals hooked up to one brainstem breathing center, but this time let us imagine an elephant hooked up with three sheep, two puppy dogs, and a rabbit. Whose carbon-

dioxide level is going to govern the brainstem trigger?

Whichever city in a nation happens to be contributing most heavily to the international export trade is likely to be the city whose needs are best served by the national currency. Any city with that edge probably gets cheaper foreign imports when its own economy can benefit from cheaper imports and probably gets an automatic tariff and export subsidy (with respect to foreign trade only) just when it needs such help. If one city gets an edge of that sort, even a small edge, we must expect that the advantage will make its economy more vigorous and more successful than those of other cities in the nation. The edge, once gained, must logically be self-intensifying and self-reinforcing, because the more economically successful that city is, the more heavily its production will weigh in the total national production and total foreign trade of the nation's cities. The more heavily it weighs, the more closely the feedback from the national currency will suit that specific city. But it won't coincide with other cities' needs and the timing necessary and natural to them; it may even contradict them outright, and certainly must deaden them. Naples has little influence on Italian international trade

and hence on the country's currency fluctuations as a consequence of the trade. Milan and the great overlapping conglomeration of city regions of which Milan forms the nucleus have an enormous effect upon Italy's international trade. With which city's needs and timing will the national currency's fluctuations best coincide?



WHAT I HAVE JUST BEEN PRESENTING IS A HYPOTHESIS. If it is correct, what we should expect to find in a nation with a large international trade in city goods is not a nation of many city regions—as one might offhand expect—but rather a nation with one overwhelmingly important city and city region, along with a collection of other cities that are feeble at generating regions of their own. And we should expect that with the passage of time the one “elephant” city would become increasingly dominant economically and the others increasingly passive and provincial.

That is the pattern the feedback anomaly I have been describing ought logically to produce, and that is indeed the pattern that typically exists and grows more marked with the passage of time. Great Britain, for several centuries, was the pre-eminent example of a country that heavily exported city-produced goods and services. But as the trade built up and London and its city region became ever more important economically, the second city of Great Britain, Glasgow, and the second city of England itself, Manchester, failed to generate city regions of any significance. Birmingham generated one, but it was in no way comparable to London's.

In Germany before its postwar partition, Berlin had become ascendant. With most of Berlin gone, West Germany's cities are today nearly equal with one another, but if the usual pattern works itself out, only one among them will eventually possess a strong and intensifying city region, and the others will become economically ever more inert and provincial. In France, only Paris has a significant city region now, in contrast to the country's so-called eight great peripheral cities: Marseille, Lyon, Strasbourg, Lille, Rouen, Brest, Nantes, and Bordeaux.

The pattern is distinctly national. For instance, the Scandinavian countries among them have less than half the population of France, and little more than southern France, which lacks any city region whatever. Yet each of the Scandinavian countries—Finland, Sweden, Norway,

and Denmark—does manage to have a significant city region. In these small countries, on a small scale, one finds the same pattern as in the larger countries I have mentioned. For example, as Denmark has built up its international trade in city-made goods and services, only Copenhagen has generated a significant region. Odense, Aarhus, and Sønderborg all are economically passive and provincial. In Sweden, development of Stockholm and its region has not implied comparable development for Göteborg.

The Netherlands presents an interesting and fortunate variation on the customary pattern. Its two largest cities, Amsterdam and Rotterdam, together with most of the country's small cities and many of its towns, have jointly formed a single overwhelmingly important region, which the Dutch call Ring City, because the amalgamation of cities and their joint city region forms a horseshoe around agricultural land and the inland sea. Partly because the cities originally formed on the coast and other peripheries of the farmland, and partly because the Dutch have had the good sense to save their most fertile land for farming, the cities pushed their regions around the ring and, instead of invading the hole, filled the interstices in the great ring. Although the country's city and city-regional development is well distributed in this fashion, rather than occurring in one single lump and leaving the rest of the country relatively poor, the fact of one great city region, Ring City, obtains here, too.

I suspect that what is happening in Japan is similar to what has happened in the Netherlands and in the north of Italy, although the configuration of the great Japanese urbanized region, with Tokyo at its nucleus, resembles neither a ring nor one fat lump but rather a huge, lopsided bow tie, with the knot at Nagoya. Tokyo and its region form only a part of this whole, much as Amsterdam and its region form part of Ring City, and Milan and its region part of the heavily urbanized north of Italy. We might logically expect Japanese cities that lie beyond this dominant urbanized region to become economically passive as time goes on, rather than proceeding to develop vigorously and to generate their own city regions. And indeed, there are now unmistakable signs of just that.

It seems as though some force is bent upon transmuting multi-city nations with very different histories, populations, and geographical sizes into something resembling city-states—that is, states overwhelmingly dominated by single city regions and their cities. That force, if I am correct, is the faulty feedback exerted by the consolidated national currency.

For a small country, transmutation into something resembling a city-state is not necessarily destructive. If the country is very small, like Denmark, or if it has a sufficiently large dominating urban region, like Ring City in the Netherlands, the nation can get along economically with its single elephant-city region. But even in small countries, the pattern exacts its penalties. Most of Den-

mark, for example, remains relatively poor and must be heavily subsidized by Copenhagen and its region.

A large nation transmuted into something resembling a city-state is a different matter. The many cities that grow more inert and provincial as time passes don't pull their weight economically. They don't make good domestic customers for the dominant region. As other cities stagnate, the dominant city and region must subsidize them, and the subsidies, being unearned, don't create self-generating growth, so the drain goes on interminably. Ultimately, most of the nation becomes incapable of supporting itself, or can do so only badly.

The elephant-city-region pattern, even in a small country, can create resentments and exacerbate ethnic bitterness or hatreds. For instance, in Czechoslovakia before the Second World War, Prague, the city of the Czechs, was dominant and steadily becoming more so. Bratislava, the city of the Slovaks, was relatively inert and provincial, and becoming more so. The Slovaks attributed the difference to political and cultural favoritism on the part of the government. The envy and anger this nurtured helped divide Czechoslovakia during the war and help divide it now.

Cities within a nation get no feedback whatsoever from the national currency with respect to their trade with one another or, of course, their domestic trade with regions that lack cities. This means that in a country with very little international trade relative to domestic trade, cities get virtually no feedback. While this lack may not deaden them, neither does it help correct or rejuvenate them when they falter. A physical analogy would be an object in equilibrium on a hill. As long as its equilibrium goes undisturbed, it can get along without feedback and maintain its position. But once it becomes even slightly out of balance, it is then downhill all the way. Just so, when the decline of a city getting no feedback does begin, the decline typically proceeds thereafter, uncorrected.

Throughout most of the history of the Chinese Empire, Chinese cities have had no feedback. Chinese tradition has it that the empire was formed of fifty-five provinces, unified under one of them, Ch'in. The provinces, in turn, are reputed to have been formed earlier of some 1,700 little city-states and principalities. That figure may or may not be true, but that a big unit was made of many smaller units is certainly true. Long before the empire was more or less solidified (repeatedly, it was militarily unified, broken apart, militarily unified, broken apart, militarily unified, broken apart), all the bases of China's artistic and material culture were developed: languages, writing, literature, philosophy, art, music, silk culture and weaving, embroidery, ornamented pottery and other ceramics, highly sophisticated metallurgy in both bronze and iron, boats, chariots, bricks, bells, wine, chess, magnets, fishnets and all the other essential fishing and agricultural implements, astronomical observations, codified laws, currencies, and much, much else. After unification, China never equaled its earlier talent for development or fulfilled the promise

that it implied. So immemorably stagnant did its cities become that by this century some 80 percent of its population was rural.

After Rome came to rule most of the world known to Rome, and the economic control of the empire became more centralized, the individual cities received less feedback. After the Western Empire disintegrated, the Eastern Empire long persisted. It too was relatively centralized and self-sufficient, trade with Venice notwithstanding (although that trade loomed large in Venice, at first it figured little in Byzantium). The Ottoman Empire, which first took over the ruins of the Byzantine Empire and then extended farther, was also relatively self-sufficient, and its cities received little feedback from the outside world. The historical fates of huge, unified realms don't hold much economic promise, to put it mildly.

THE OUTSTANDING MODERN EXAMPLE OF SUCH A realm is the United States. After the tariff policy had overcome the initial feedback flaw that afflicted the country, the United States became a nation whose currency gave cities almost no feedback on how their own trade was doing. The flourishing northern cities proceeded to produce for one another and for the country's regions lacking cities, and to make little for the world outside. Most kinds of foreign imports that arrived were swiftly replaced with local production in this city or that one, and the reproductions, adaptations, and improvements were sold as domestic products. The goods and services of their own devising that American cities cast up, often truly unprecedented goods and services and often ones that solved very important practical problems, also went overwhelmingly into domestic trade. In time, to be sure, American manufactured exports, along with services such as engineering and equipment installation, loomed large in some of the countries receiving them (Uruguay, for one), but they did not loom large in the total production and trade of American cities. As the American cities burgeoned, the rural international exports that had once so threatened their economies lost their importance to total trade. American cities themselves became the chief markets of the country's rural products. The cotton went increasingly to the mill towns of New England in Boston's orbit, and then to industries transplanted south from New England. The tobacco went increasingly to American manufacturers and, ultimately, consumers. Beef cattle and hogs went to packing houses in Kansas City and Chicago, then later to rural and small-city packing houses—in either case mainly for consumption within the nation. The country's domestic trade hovered at about 95 percent of its total trade, foreign and domestic, and sometimes exceeded that.

With no admonitory feedback from the national currency, American cities flourished, but only up to a point. All cities tend to have their runs of bad economic times, for reasons ranging from unavoidable bad luck to outright

shortsightedness, folly, and overspecialization. Furthermore, every city's already-established export work dwindles over time. A city that loses export work without compensating for the loss is a city doomed to decline. Such a city needs help and needs it fast, needs the equivalent of tariffs and export subsidies. No city can get this in a country like the United States. Although American cities were able to build up their economies to an astonishing degree with no feedback help (other than the tariffs that countermanded false feedback information), they have had no means of self-correction whenever they have begun to lose important export work.

Today, so many American cities are stagnant and in economic decline that the stagnation and decline are acknowledged to be "national" problems. But taken individually, American cities have been stagnating for a long time now. The first of the major cities to stagnate decisively was probably Pittsburgh, at about the turn of the century. During the eight decades since, city after city has been stagnating and not pulling out of it: little cities like Rochester, Utica, Scranton, Akron, Toledo, Wilmington, Camden; larger cities like Buffalo, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Seattle, Detroit, New York. New York's economy has been declining since at least the 1940s, and yet never did a city have better responsive equipment with which to make corrections than New York did then. But the corrections weren't made, and now much of the responsive equipment itself is lost—the versatility at producing, the range of producers' goods and services, the skills—and much of what remains is obsolescent. One among many symptoms of the city's growing poverty is that today it cannot afford to repair its rundown subway system, water-supply system, and roads and bridges, although in the days when the city was economically vigorous it was able, from its own revenues, to carry the capital costs of creating these great systems, and much more.

In the meantime, the Sun Belt cities of the American South and West have been rising, and this would be all to the good except that in large part their economic bases consist of military production and of exports to backward client states. Military production and international trade in sophisticated goods from advanced to backward countries are profoundly dead-end forms of economic activity. They are not so much means of development and expansion as they are means by which to temporize with economic sluggishness.

Since about 1960 in the United States, the proportion of international to domestic trade has gradually been rising, to about 15 percent in 1980. American exports increasingly

consist of agricultural exports such as soybeans and wheat. New manufactured exports go largely to client states, in many cases on credit, and increasingly consist of military goods. New imports, for the most part, consist of city-made goods with which American goods can no longer compete in quality or price. Imports arriving from Japan are increasingly made by methods that render American producers' equipment and techniques obsolete. Thus it is not surprising that clamor grows for new tariffs or for negotiated quotas on foreign manufactured goods. But American cities are not suffering from the contradictory currency feedback that tariffs can countermand. They are suffering, rather, from failure to correct their own economies, and as one after another has stagnated they have been letting one another down. Tariffs are no remedy for that form of city failure.

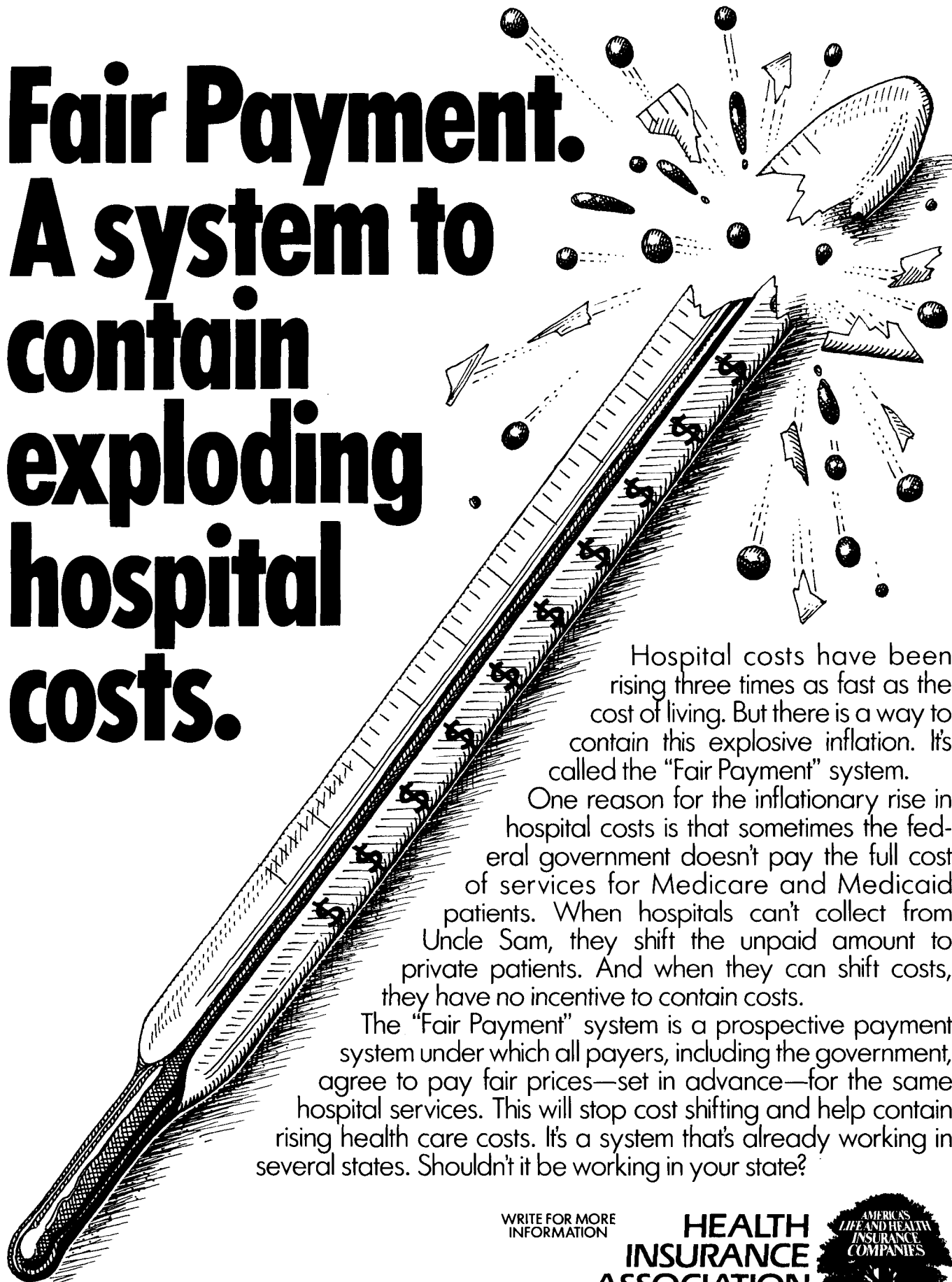
One might say, except that it implies an undeserved censure, that American cities have suffered badly from lack of economic discipline: the discipline imposed by currency fluctuations, or, if we prefer, the opportunities presented by currency fluctuations. These can make it possible for a city's falterings to be merely temporary. But uncorrected, faltering becomes final. The failure is not the fault of the cities, the government, or the American people. It is a structural flaw that comes with the territory. We must be grateful that a world government and a world currency are still only dreams.

I do not mean to imply that currency fluctuations are the only determinants of whether a city, and its region if it has developed one, can repeatedly replace imports and vigorously generate exports. The fact that we must inhale and exhale doesn't mean that we live on air alone. Other factors are important too. Nonetheless, currency fluctuations are a powerful force, a potent form of feedback control, for good, for ill, or for nil.

As far as I can see, there are no remedies that a city or a nation can apply, short of separations (in the pattern of Singapore), for correcting the flaw I have hypothesized as leading some cities to become elephant cities while deadening others, and none for correcting the lack of feedback. But that doesn't mean that nations don't try to remedy, countermand, or compensate for the exasperating stagnation of their cities and decline of their economies. They typically try hard and ingeniously to do just those things. But, as we shall see, their efforts tend to be worse than futile, for they only deepen and hasten widespread city stagnation and decline, unwittingly piling further structural economic flaws upon the built-in structural flaw of faulty or missing feedback to their cities. □

This is the first of two articles on the world economy.

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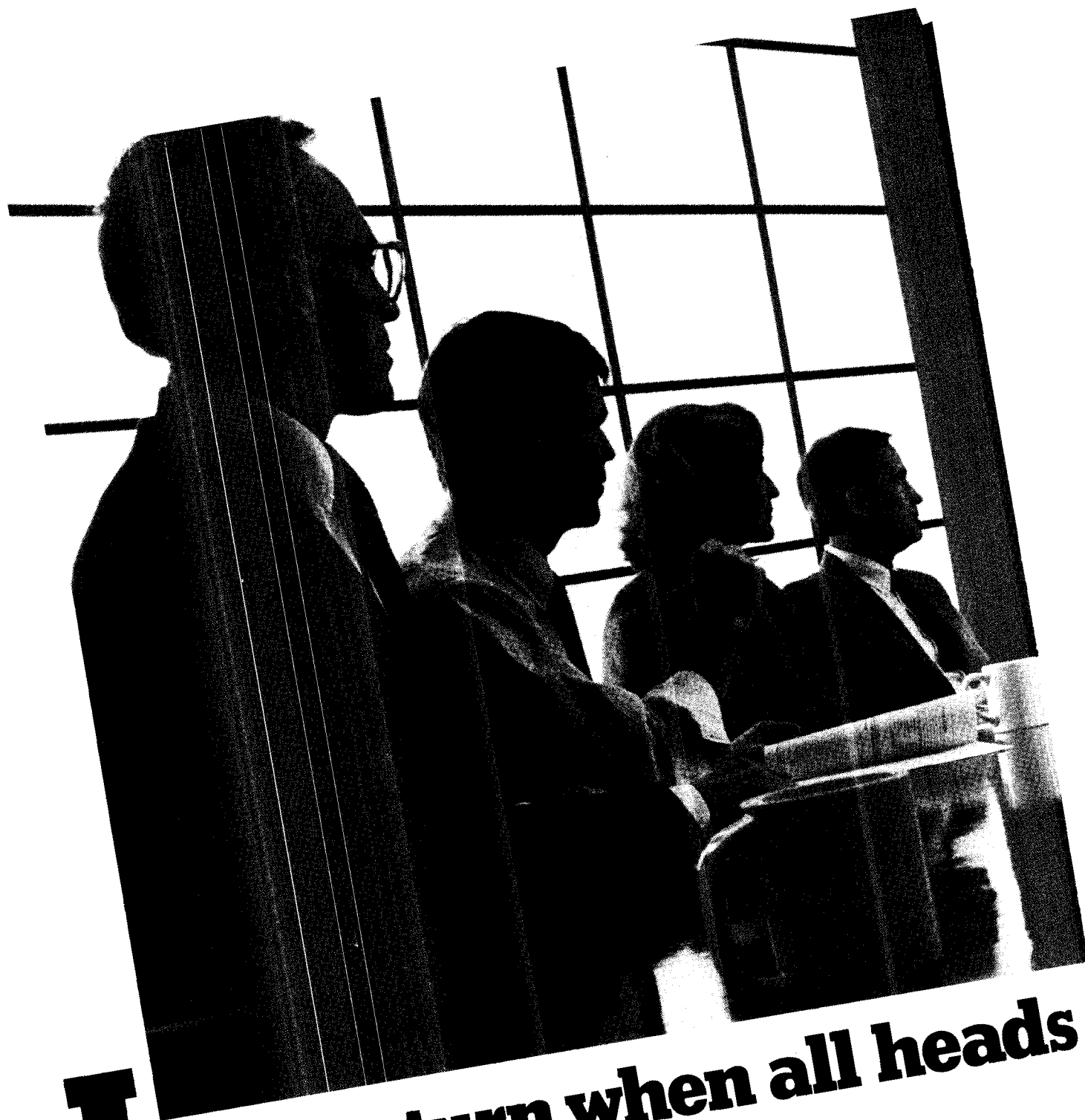
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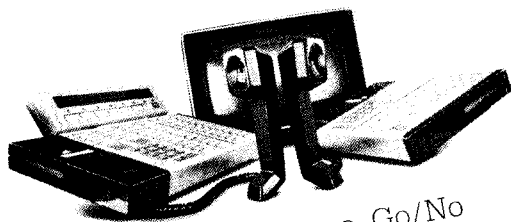
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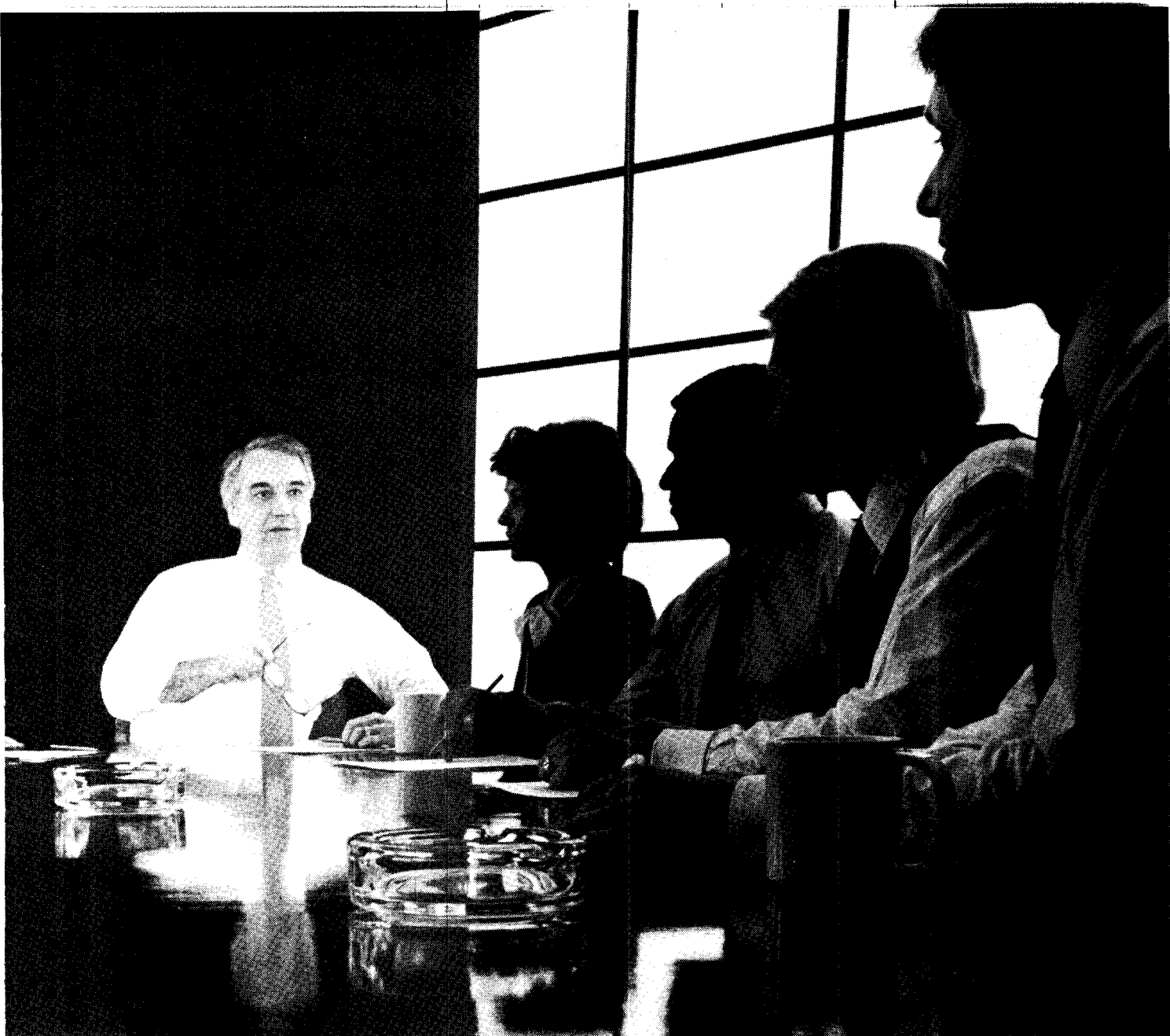
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Economic Snake Oil

It was Humpty Dumpty who said, "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less." Not only Humpty Dumpty claims this prerogative. A lot of people do, particularly when it comes to industrial policy. It means different things to different people. It's a controversial subject. And the controversy centers on the kind of presence and control the federal government should have in the economy.

Make no mistake. Government has a responsibility to create an environment conducive to industrial and economic growth. That's why government helped finance the nation's railroads in the last century and its highways in this one.

Encouraging domestic discovery and production of raw materials, stimulating quality education, supporting generic research and development, encouraging capital formation, promoting exports—these are some examples of legitimate government functions which work to enhance America's competitive position in world markets.

All these actions are done with no particular industry in mind. From time to time the government does intervene to prevent certain mergers or to aid a distressed sector of the economy. But this is always done on an *ad hoc* basis. The government does not—as a matter of policy—favor one industry over another.

There are those who argue that this is precisely what it should do. They want the government to make decisions

about the size and shape of particular industries and the direction investments should take. They want the kind of industrial policy, in other words, that picks winners and losers. In effect, the government would decide who lives—and who dies. Business decisions now influenced by the forces of the competitive marketplace would be shaped as never before in the political arena.

This kind of industrial policy is misguided policy.

By giving special assistance to favored industries, industrial policy would hurt other industries. It would produce trade policies that are protectionist, and economic policies that reward inefficiencies and shelter selected industries from legitimate competition. The industries with the greatest political clout would get the greatest aid. So it is a policy that would pander to special interests. And it would require a degree of federal government control over the economy that the American people have accepted only in wartime.

Its proponents believe industrial policy is some kind of magical elixir that will rejuvenate our economy. In reality, it's more like snake oil that peddlers sell from the back of their medicine wagons. And if you read the contents of the label carefully, you'll find it contains a healthy dose of economic inefficiency mixed with an equal amount of pork barrel politics—all neatly packaged in a straitjacket of government control.



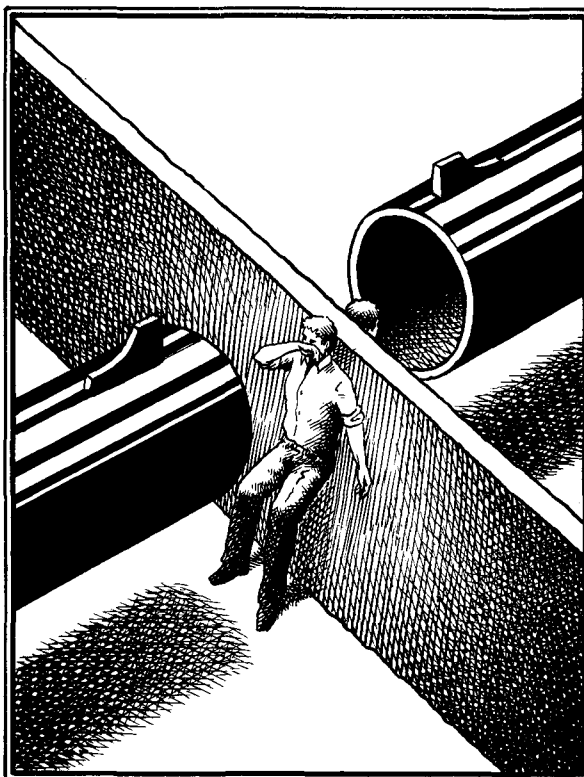
*Demythologizing the
"foolish question" of who is to rule the world*

A PATH TOWARD PEACE

BY GEORGE KONRÁD

TO FIND THE MAIN REASON for the threat of war today, we must go back to the year 1945, to Yalta. It was there that a helpless Europe was divided; it was there that agreements were reached for military zones of occupation that would become political spheres of interest as well. Yalta gave birth to a system of international relations based upon a state of rivalry and equilibrium between the Soviet Union and the United States. Whether the three gentlemen who met there knew it or not, the idea of the Iron Curtain, a symbol of Great Power logic, was born at Yalta. Three old men—Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill—decided the fate of hundreds of millions for decades to come, the hundreds of millions having to respect their decision.

What a dirty trick of history! The Allies, who were defending mankind from fascist inhumanity, hastened, on the very eve of victory, to strike an imperialist bargain, a pact between Anglo-Saxon and Soviet imperialism. They were able to do it because they commanded the biggest battalions, and they went ahead and did it because—despite all the universalist rhetoric—nationalism, the ideology of the expansive nation-state, impelled them to. They thought it their historic right as victors to dictate the terms of peace. They made the mistake of thinking—whether in good faith or bad, we don't know—that on the will of a victor can be based the peace of a continent. A mistake with a long history, to be sure: for thousands of years, an unjust peace following one war has led to the next war. A powerful victor makes an arbitrary peace that the vanquished cannot accept.



The implication of Yalta is that the military status quo determines the political status quo. The morality of Yalta is simple: those who have the bombs and tanks decide on the social and political system. Since the United States and the Soviet Union had the most bombs and tanks, they were called to lead the world. Later—by the fearful light of Hiroshima—their leadership was confirmed, for only these two giant nation-states had the resources to build arsenals of nuclear weapons.

Thus, whoever has the power of annihilation is called to lead the world. The Soviet and the American leader have more power than all the tyrants of history combined. I look at those two faces and I blanch. I wouldn't entrust the fate of hu-

manity to even an Aristotle or a Kant. Is it possible that the Lord put the button of the Last Judgment under the fingers of two vain, frail old men? If they are human, like all the sons and daughters of Cain, their fingers must weigh heavily on the button. I trust not in their wisdom but only in their fear of death.

The status quo in Europe represents the petrification of an exceptional state of postwar occupation. Diplomatic declarations and the political consensus of nations agree in presenting this exceptional situation as a normal state of affairs. At Helsinki all the states involved solemnly declared that henceforward this absurdity would be law.

Why does the West refuse to accept the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan? Because they haven't been there very long. Their presence in Eastern Europe is reasonable and acceptable by now, because they have been there nearly forty years. And it is all the more acceptable because American forces are present in Western Europe.

Limited national sovereignty as circumscribed by the Warsaw Pact is bearable because the more loosely re-

George Konrád is a Hungarian novelist and sociologist. The material in this essay will appear in somewhat different form in his new book, Antipolitics, to be published soon by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

stricted national sovereignty defined by NATO is bearable. Indeed, both sets of limitations are geopolitical givens, respected by every rational politician. To question the partition of Europe is dangerous and misleading, because it fosters the illusion that it is possible to end it.

The West is not strong enough to compel the Soviet forces stationed in Eastern Europe to return home. At most, it can protest the expansion of those forces, however little impact that may have on Soviet military conduct. If, however, the West really wants to see those forces return home, why not make the Russians an offer advantageous to both sides? One might, for example, propose a mutual and balanced withdrawal of forces—not a reduction, a withdrawal. Is it a mad fancy to enunciate the principle that no one country should keep soldiers on the territory of another? I remember how, on October 23, 1956, the young men and women of Budapest chanted their new rhyme:

*Soldiers from everywhere,
Go home and stay there.*

I have liked this little verse ever since; a quarter of a century later, it seems more timely than ever.

TO DATE, THE WEST HAS HAD NO POSITIVE STRATEGY of peace; it has merely rejected with suspicion the more or less propagandistic proposals of the Soviets. But the West doesn't lack the political capacity to take a creative initiative. Standing by Yalta is not a long-term strategy but merely a ratification of the status quo, which is impossible in any long perspective. The peoples of Central Europe should ponder this carefully; twice already, unsettled conditions in their region have led to world war.

If the West wants Yalta, the Soviet Union will move beyond Yalta—by moving westward. If the West wants Yalta, it can have November 4, 1956, in Budapest; August 21, 1968, in Prague; and December 13, 1981, in Warsaw. After every such aggression, the West laments, protests, and looks on with alarm. Then, by and by, it signs a new agreement, largely for public-relations purposes, while in the background the arms race goes on undisturbed.

Not a single European government has made the cardinal peace proposal: removal of the Iron Curtain. Europe's politicians have no bold, incisive peace strategy and don't seek to launch any useful debate. This intellectual passivity is simply a retreat before Soviet peace propaganda, which uses military force to make Europeans and the whole world acknowledge that what the Soviets acquired in the Second World War is theirs. From the Pacific Ocean to the Iron Curtain, their empire is a seamless whole; to contest it from within is counterrevolution, while to contest it from without is to meddle in their internal affairs. The Helsinki Declaration only confirmed, three decades afterward, the agreements reached at Yalta.

It is pleasant to commiserate with the unfortunate Eastern Europeans, but let no one think that the West is going

to make any trouble on their account. They have détente, they have credits, what more do they want? What more? They want a creative initiative, a concrete, tangible peace proposal, a plan to take down the Iron Curtain. They want Western Europeans to understand that while Eastern Europe remains under occupation, Western Europeans cannot live in security. Western Europe is moving toward neutrality of its own accord, without even trying to demand that Eastern Europe be neutralized in exchange. It takes little intelligence to cling to either the ideology of blind loyalty to NATO or that of unilateral concessions. Western Europe will find a worthy place for itself in the world only when it no longer allows the U.S.-Soviet dichotomy to determine its place.

To prevent a third world war, all foreign troops must be withdrawn from Europe. The fundamental guarantee of peace is a mutual agreement among the European states to withdraw from the two military blocs and abolish the Iron Curtain. Through a process of gradual integration, the western corner of the Eurasian land mass might then develop into a European confederation.

Doesn't it make sense to ask whether there are any proposals for a nonviolent solution that might prevent Europe from becoming the scene of a third and final world war? It is the Europeans, we Europeans, who are at stake. It is because of us that the two greatest nation-states in the world confront each other. Our intellectual failings brought about the baleful situation in which our continent is cut in two. European nation-states, European political doctrines, and the collective shortsightedness of respected European politicians are responsible for the Iron Curtain. No European political class is blameless; no European nation is exempt. Nowhere in Europe can a realistic public opinion pretend that it remains unaffected by the Iron Curtain, by its influence today and its possible consequences tomorrow.

It is an unobservant European who fails to notice that the Iron Curtain is made of explosive material. Western Europe rests its back against a wall of dynamite, while blithely gazing out over the Atlantic. I consider Western Europe's good fortune to be as uncertain as Eastern Europe's misfortune. Caught between the United States and the Soviet Union, we Europeans can assure peace only if we detach ourselves from them militarily by agreement, and then go on to draw the two parts of a divided Europe together again.

IF WE WERE TO CONSIDER CAREFULLY, AS A STUDENT of contemporary history might, what concrete conflicts of interest divide the Soviet and American peoples today, we would be surprised at how few there are. And if we were to count the opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation between the two if they suspended the ideological war, we would be surprised at how many there are.

The ideological war is far from an unalterable fact. Anyone who believes that two systems and two ideologies are pitted against each other today has fallen victim to the secularized metaphysics of our civilization, which looks for a duel between God and Satan in what is, after all, only a game. Russians and Americans—their political classes, that is—circle each other in the ring. Each of the two heavyweight champions would like to show that he is the strongest in the world; they are playing a game with each other whose paraphernalia includes nuclear missiles. Yet it is impossible to construct from the Soviet-American conflict an ideological dichotomy along whose axis the values of our continent can be ranged. The antitheses that fill our minds—capitalism versus state socialism, democracy versus totalitarianism, market economy versus planned economy—are forced mythologies that the intelligentsias of East and West either confuse with reality or, being aware that they are not very precise, seek to square with the facts.

What is basic and decisive is the strategy of the nation-state, which the political class of every nation devises and then declares to be identical with that country's interest. The various universalist appeals to the working class or to Christianity, to socialism or to freedom, are merely weapons in the strategy of the nation-state. We stand close to a third world war today because the American and Russian political classes have chosen confrontation and a prestige fight for world supremacy.

I consider the demythologizing of politics to be the first duty of grown, thinking people. It is our business because it is the only way we can save our lives.

Europe suffered two world wars because of Franco-German rivalry, which once appeared fateful but today seems quite contrived. The question of who should be master in Europe played a larger role in that contest than any concrete economic, demographic, or territorial conflict of interest. The game ended both times with the far-from-glorious triumph of France, and along the way Europe fell under the domination of the two peripheral powers, the Soviet Union and the United States. The question was answered: the nations strongest in Europe were not in Europe but in Eurasia and North America.

Ideologies played their part too, but the struggle of nations was the essential thing, and the result was what might have been expected: the biggest nation was the strongest one. A race for prestige between two middle-sized European nations delivered up our continent to two enormous extra-European nation-states. Neither any ideology nor any continental community of interest was able to prevent the struggle of the political classes of those two states for hegemony over Europe. If there had been no Franco-German rivalry, there would have been no First World War; if there had been no First World War, there would have been no Hitler. If there had been no Hitler, there would have been no Yalta.

Yet all of European culture bore responsibility for the

First World War—philosophies as well as historical theories, poetic myths as well as formulations of interest. The fundamental values of the European intelligentsia, as well as the bluster of the nation-state, were to blame.

All three universal spiritual currents—Christianity, liberalism, and socialism—subordinated themselves to the ethos of particularism, the sentimental belligerence of the nation-states' bureaucracies: nationalism. Army chaplains rendered abundantly unto Caesar the things that were his; they exalted the murderous heroic deed. Liberals, according to their nineteenth-century custom, identified the conquest or defense of markets and sources of raw materials with the defense of civilization. Socialists looked into their hearts and discovered that they were no worse patriots than the others; they too could shoot at their comrades of other nationalities. From Zurich, meanwhile, Lenin saw that a war economy offered a high road to a system of redistributive state communism.

The romanticism of the nation-state triumphed everywhere. Overrefined poets prattled of redemption by fire; impotence identified vigor with bloodshed. And what has happened since? Nothing. Another world war, with three times as many dead, and the preparation of the physical and spiritual arsenal for a third. And the cream of our culture is complicitous in that labor of preparation, by virtue of its fecklessness in the face of it.

It was totally senseless that so many people should perish over the foolish question of who should rule in Europe, Germans or Frenchmen, for the question was answerable in advance: neither would rule. And it was not a novel notion even then that each and every people should take care of its own affairs, cooperating with the others in linking together the cultures and institutions of the continent to create a better society.

Today, too, it is completely senseless for us to die over the foolish question of who is to rule the world—Russia or America. Neither is going to rule. Neither has a right or a mission to lead the world, or indeed even the potential to do so. To be sure, both superpowers justify their egotism by appealing to some universal, international, and majoritarian principle of legitimacy. A powerful nation-state in the second half of the twentieth century, following the collapse of the German bid for world hegemony with its heavy reliance on nationalistic ideas, can found its claims to quasi-global authority only on supranational values. For world dominion today, universalist ideas are required; and the real interests of the inhabitants of every country must be linked with those ideas.

The driving force behind the struggle for world power is not an ideological commitment to any social and political system or to the values of a given culture; it is the craving of the strongest national elites for world dominion as found primarily in their political classes, and in their military and technical classes as well. It is likely that the representatives of both the Russian and the American power elite fancy that they have a mission to lead the world. For the power

professional, power on a worldwide scale is the greatest earthly good.

The alternatives to the ideal of world power can only be metaphysical, ethical, aesthetic, and scientific, but statesmen, by reason of their occupation, are necessarily more interested in political power than in metaphysics or ethics, aesthetics or science. The medium of politics is power over people—power backed up by weapons. The not-very-cultivated intelligentsia that forms the political, military, and bureaucratic elite of every nation-state is too red-blooded and too commonplace to find any pleasure more voluptuous than the sensual experience of power.

BOTH GREAT POWERS are tempted, from time to time, by the lure of global victory—the strategy of a worldwide offensive. The Russians, of course, are no strangers to this temptation. What has the dream of world revolution been ever since October of 1917, if not a vision of world domination by the Third Rome, the Moscow of the true Communist faith? Marxist-Leninist revolutionism of the Bolshevik variety is the export rhetoric of Russian imperialism.

Today this is clearer than ever, as more details come to light about the Red Army Faction, the Red Brigades, Latin American guerrillas, the PLO, and other “anti-imperialist,” ultra-radical groups that espouse armed insurrection and liberation through terrorism (officially disavowed in Eastern Europe); or about the Libyan secret police, organized on the Soviet and East German model; or about the Hungarian, Czech, East German, and Soviet training camps for guerrillas and terrorists; or, above all, about the export of arms from Eastern Europe.

Ugly though it may sound when the Americans label all this as international terrorism, and true though it may be that the Palestine issue and the Salvadoran civil war cannot be attributed solely to the machinations of Soviet agents, it is also clear that in a bipolar world the two sides in a local conflict can be reduced by the logic of the situation to being agents of the two Great Powers, agents simultaneously sincere and bought.

All this revolutionary phraseology, which, as we can see here in Eastern Europe, no longer has any real basis in the countries where socialism is said to have been achieved, has little to do with any utopia, but it has everything to do with the conspiratorial foreign expansion of the Soviet sys-

tem. All the revolutionary rhetoric is merely instrumental in character; it is a tool of Soviet global expansion, geared to serving the Soviet option of victory.

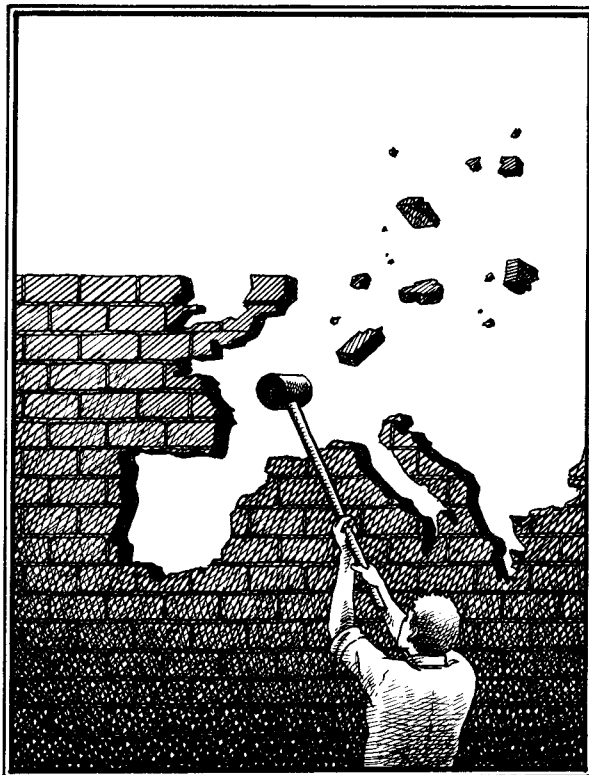
Soviet expansion seems to come in waves. There are times when it revives and times when it is dormant. During the pauses, one may think that the Russians are only waiting to make their next advance, but it is also thinkable that at such times they are uncertain whether they are on the right track. The civilian and military policy-makers who influence and finally make the decisions must some-

times wonder (though not in public) what their country's relationship to the rest of the world is and ought to be.

I hardly think that Russian policy-makers are crackpots, or men possessed, or ideological fanatics. They are mature, dry, stolid, cautious, mistrustful men; they don't want to come out losers in the game. They don't want to be forced into a corner or see their country humiliated. Their historical experience has been one of being regarded with suspicion, of being encircled and attacked. It is almost as if they believe that expansion is necessary for defense. Lest the enemy attack the frontiers, buffer states must be created on every frontier. They occupied half of Poland in 1939 so as to have a buffer there to absorb any blow—and, sure enough, the blow followed.

Anyone in politics has to understand the other side's neuroses; it is not enough to scold the other fellow for misbehaving because he wants something different. Fear of occupation is a historical Russian reflex; hence the Russians would rather be the ones to do the occupying. For a long time they were under the occupation of Tartar khans; Ivan the Great, Ivan the Terrible, and Peter the Great subsequently succeeded in defending their independence against Tartars, Turks, Poles, and Swedes only by attacking and expanding, while their people multiplied and settled the great empty spaces of the Russian plain, Siberia, and Central Asia. The Russian state stretched out toward Central Europe and reached down into Central Asia, lest the enemy occupy Moscow. This people that had to fight for its independence learned too much from its occupiers, the Tartar khans, and has never felt secure. Constantly jealous of its independence and suspicious of others, it has not shrunk from perfidy.

After independence came Westernization and a new orientation toward Europe. And what did the Russians get



from the West? They got Napoleon and Hitler and, in time of peace, a full measure of disdain, condescension, and fear; they were regarded as barbaric, rude, stupid, unpolished.

They spoke French, but French rationalism took shallow root in their souls. Reading the two greatest Russian writers of the nineteenth century, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, we can see how it is possible to regard Western Europe as the Eldorado of the petit bourgeois—a soulless civilization of insensitive, parsimonious rationalists, fussy pedants, individualists indifferent toward their fellow man and the community, where prosperity and technique may be found, but not happiness or salvation, where normality exists, but not exaltation.

One need only read what the Russians write about the French, and what the French write about them, to feel the profound lack of comprehension between these two nations, allied for so long in foreign policy and linked by long-standing cultural ties. Here two national identities attracted to each other—and for that very reason unintelligible to each other—asserted themselves forcefully. It is fitting to cite the Franco-Russian tie because it is the most obvious and symbolic East-West relationship in Europe.

Any compromise between Russians and Europeans must be preceded by understanding between two cultures, between two kinds of reason. It is necessary to understand how Dostoyevsky's relationship to the West differed from Stalin's, and how it was akin to it. Today there is no Tolstoy and no Dostoyevsky. There is only Solzhenitsyn, a giant in his writings on the gulag, to be sure, but also a writer who has never outgrown the conceptual matrix of Russian Orthodox nationalist ideology; in his work the passion for judgment outruns the passion to understand. He has not tried to understand the West, or America as a part of it, and this may inspire doubts about how well he has been able to understand his own country. Who will come after Solzhenitsyn? Who will be the independent Russian thinker who will make a historic proposal to both the West and the Russian power elite, telling them how Russians and Europeans can live with each other?

AFTER THE INITIAL DIFFICULTIES OF THE POST-Stalin period, the Russians took heart and devised a two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, they called for détente: mutual respect for frontiers and for the sovereignty of the power elites over the populations within them. On the other hand, they carried out a substantial arms buildup and strove to keep up the ideological war. In the ideological sphere, they have often said, there is no peaceful coexistence. They wanted to maintain the world revolutionary movement, by supporting so-called national liberation movements, primarily through the export of weapons, ideology, and advisers—the technology of winning and retaining power.

This strategy was all the more attractive to Russian

policy-makers because the colonial empires of the European middle powers were disintegrating, and the movements and states of the uncommitted world were making their clamorous entry onto the world stage. What if it were possible to encircle Atlantic civilization with a ring of anti-imperialist countries? What if it were possible to tighten the ring around Western Europe and North America? Suppose that imperialism could be cut off from its raw materials and energy supplies. Or could the strategic confrontation be won on the world market? Could politics triumph over economics? Could world communism beat world capitalism by means of a great anti-imperialist coalition of the Soviet bloc and the Third World?

Support for Idi Amin and Colonel Qaddafi, indirect support for terrorists—these were only the incidental means adopted, now shrewdly, now foolishly, in carrying out this two-pronged strategy: in Europe, détente and the slow neutralization of Western Europe; in the Third World, armed expansion by means of surrogates. It cannot be said that the Americans remained idle in the meantime. They lost in Vietnam, they won in Egypt—the shifting fortunes of war. But to return to the Russians: they became overconfident, they spread their nets too far. They gambled too much and spent too much on the means of expansion, which cost too much and brought in too little. In pursuing the dual option, the Russians miscalculated. They never decided what they wanted: to win or to settle.

Afghanistan was the most recent of the expansion efforts. With their intervention there, the Russians blundered into a hornet's nest. They brought more trouble than profit on themselves. The invasion of Afghanistan—the strategic highway to the oil resources of the Persian Gulf—reminded the West that the Russians are impelled by longer-range strategic and military considerations.

Not everything that the Reagan Administration analysts say is unfounded. The new Russian medium-range missiles, the expanded navy, the transfer of national income to military purposes at the cost of squeezing domestic programs—all this suggests that the Soviet leaders still consider the option of victory to be at least as valid as the option of a settlement with America. The disquieting convergence of the civil and military apparatuses, the silencing of the democratic opposition, the unbending severity toward protests over emigration restrictions, the inability to give any real autonomy to the peasants (even though more production is needed from their plots) or to the industrial enterprises (even though an efficient, high-quality industrial sector is needed)—these too suggest that the Russian elite is more concerned with external power than with domestic prosperity. It is also true that when America displays strength the Russians become more moderate, and when America shows weakness the Russians begin to flex their muscles again. All of these truths are reason enough that America should show strength. They are not, however, an argument for America in its turn to adopt a strategy of global victory.

America should offer a settlement to those present or future Russian leaders who are themselves inclined to prefer a settlement to a strategy of victory, with the excessive risk and trouble and the dubious benefits that such a strategy entails. It would be up to that hypothetical group in the Russian leadership to make a case for a settlement before their country's elite, in opposition to arguments for the possibility of victory. The West, if it is sensible, will help them. How? By formulating the terms and the stakes of a settlement clearly and honestly; by making a straightforward business proposition. If the West responds to the two-pronged Soviet strategy with a two-pronged strategy of its own, then it will be repeating the Russians' mistake.

IDEALLY, THE AMERICANS SHOULD MAKE AN OFFER like this to the Russians: You will get complete security if you give self-determination to the Eastern European countries. Between us we will permit a strong and peaceful Europe to arise, on good terms with us and with you. We are getting nowhere haggling over how many missiles you can have and how many we can have, how many of your soldiers there should be in the Warsaw Pact countries and how many of ours in the NATO countries. We will never agree on these matters, even if we sit and talk till we drop. We are only kidding the world by going along with these Geneva and Vienna talks. We declare reassuringly that we are going to negotiate at the highest level, or at lower levels; it's all the same if negotiations start out from unproductive premises or follow a course that both of us know will lead nowhere. The reason we get nowhere is that you want to score and we want to score, you want to cheat us and we want to cheat you, you are jealous of your superiority and we are jealous of ours. These arms-control talks are a smokescreen to conceal the fact that we both go on arming, by mutual consent. How would it be if we changed our approach and addressed essential matters? To hell with Europe—it means only trouble for you and for us. These are old nations; they will get along without our tutelage. We should be pursuing not quantitative solutions but rather a European historical, political, and ideological solution. We don't mean to offend you, but really, this socialism of yours, you know, it's not so incomparably advanced. Without our grain, you and your cattle wouldn't live nearly so well. You too have things to do in your own back yard. Maybe it's time to give up the slogan that clever fellow Khrushchev came up with almost a quarter-century ago, the one about overtaking, passing, and burying us. Couldn't there still be peaceful coexistence, a few common denominators, some modest consensus between us in ideology or in the way we set our goals and priorities? That in itself would be more than détente; it would be peace.

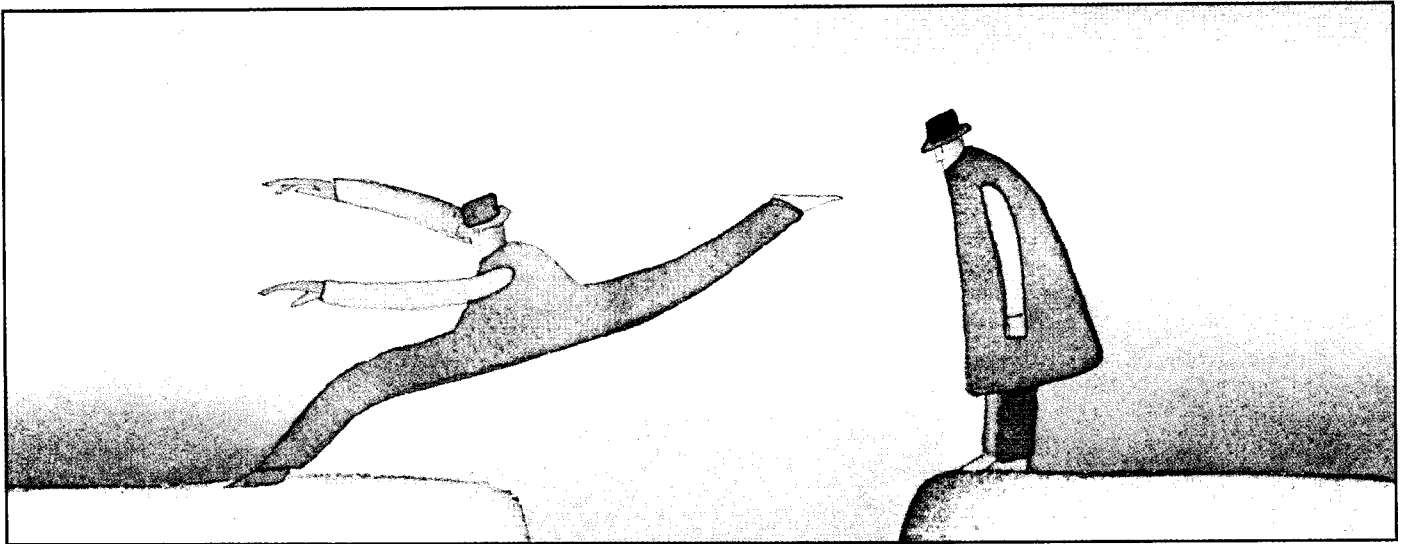
When I read the arguments of Reagan Administration officials and sympathetic journalists now, I don't see that such an offer is about to emanate from the Oval Office or from anyplace else in America. After Vietnam, it is understandable that the Americans would like to score a foreign-policy success somewhere. The question is, in what way are they most likely to do so? It is not enough to play the tough guy, not enough to project the movie ideals of American mythology onto the complex fabric of international relations. It is not enough to talk ad infinitum of new arms deliveries, new weapons systems, strategic balance. More intelligence is needed in approaching the Russians; we cannot be content with the empty assertion that the Russians understand only force. In fact, what the Russians would understand would be a mutually advantageous business proposition, forcefully advanced—a proposition outlining a historic compromise between the Soviet Union and the United States.

The Soviets cannot be excluded as constructive partners from either the Middle East or Southeast Asia. If they are shut out, they will only reappear—either directly, as in Afghanistan, or indirectly, through the governments and movements aligned with them—to demand a part in any settlement or to disturb existing arrangements. If America continually strives to push the Russians out everywhere, it will only meet with disappointment, because if the Russians don't come back in through the door they will come back in through the window; if they are not present officially and constructively, they will be there unofficially and destructively, clinging to the prestige owed a serious global partner and constantly resentful at being so rudely left out of the game.

So let them play! Let them send advisers everywhere if they have so many to spare, but let them be doctors, not soldiers, and dispatched by mutual agreement. Are there no more such advisers, no more packets of food and medicine? That would be a shame. America would indeed take a great initiative toward solving the problems of the world if it combined its efforts with those of the Russians, in the same way that the two cooperate now in research on cancer or controlled fusion energy.

It is a decisive question for Europe whether the Russian elite has committed itself permanently and irrevocably to the military option. Can we hope that it has enough confidence in itself and in Soviet society to turn to addressing its internal and external tasks creatively? If the Soviet leaders could say "We are what we are, we stand where we stand, what we want is to have a better life; we would rather be loved than feared; we are strong enough so that no one would want to attack us"—if the Soviet leadership talked like this, then we could believe that Russia is governed not just by old men but by grown men. □

—translated by Richard Allen



NUCLEAR ENERGY

Is America being left behind?

"In Europe, it's still full speed ahead for nuclear power"

New York Times, December 4, 1983

"Japan pursuing aggressive nuclear energy program"

Business Week, September 19, 1983

"Britain, China sign agreement for Chinese nuclear power plant"

Wall Street Journal, December 8, 1983

News stories like these raise questions about what, if anything, America stands to lose if we fall behind in nuclear energy development.

Eighty-four nuclear power plants are now licensed to operate across the U.S., and fifty more are being built. But since 1978, no future nuclear plants have been planned in this country. During the same period, at least 40 such plants have been ordered in other parts of the world.

Nuclear electricity is growing worldwide

There are now close to 300 nuclear power plants producing electricity in 25 countries throughout the world. Japan, France, the Soviet Union, and China are among the many nations committed to nuclear electricity as an economic, safe alternative to oil-fired and coal-fired power—despite reduced rates of growth in energy consumption.

In Japan, eight new nuclear plants are due to start producing electricity over the next three years. Japanese companies are designing their own advanced reactors and making it

possible to gain the edge in nuclear energy technology.

Soon, over 50 percent of France's electricity will be nuclear-generated. It takes only six years or so to get a nuclear plant built there, which is half the average time needed to build one in the U.S.

A secure America needs a balanced mix of energy sources

Our country has a lot more oil, natural

gas, and coal than either France or Japan. But oil supplies are uncertain. Natural gas is more valuable for other uses than for burning in power plants. And coal, though essential, can't be expected to do the job alone.

What is best for the practical generation of large amounts of electricity? The National Academy of Sciences has stated that "Coal and nuclear power are the only economic alternatives for large-scale application in the remainder of this century."

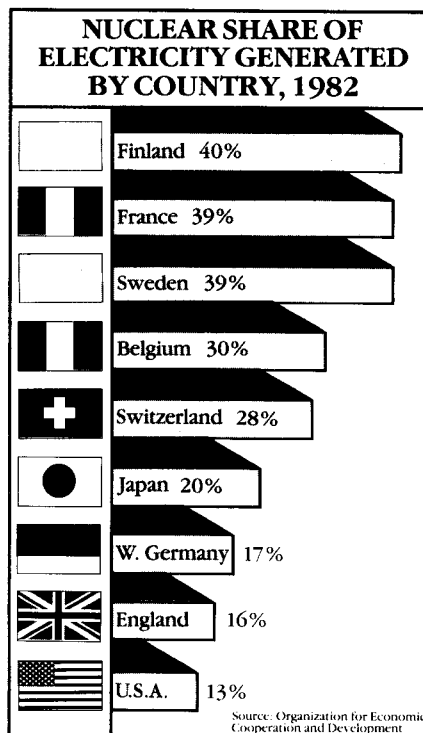
The cost of not pushing ahead

Through the growing use of nuclear electricity, countries all over the world are reducing their dependence on oil and strengthening their position in increasingly competitive world markets. They realize that a healthy national economy needs a healthy supply of energy.

Will we have to play a costly game of catch-up in the competition ahead? America runs the risk of doing just that—if we ignore the growing international reliance on nuclear energy, and the reasons behind that growth.

Free booklet tells more

For a free booklet that covers nuclear electricity in more detail, write to the U.S. Committee for Energy Awareness, P.O. Box 37012 (46), Washington, D.C. 20013.



In many countries throughout the world, nuclear power is now supplying a substantial share of the electricity that people consume.

Information about energy
America can count on today

U.S. COMMITTEE FOR ENERGY AWARENESS

SAINT MARIE

A SHORT STORY
BY LOUISE ERDRICH

SO WHEN I WENT THERE, I KNEW THE DARK FISH must rise. Plumes of radiance had been soldered on me. No reservation girl had ever prayed so hard. There was no use in trying to ignore me any longer. I was going up there on the hill with the black-robe women. None were any lighter than me. I was going up there to pray as good as they could, because I don't have that much Indian blood. And they never thought they'd have a girl from this reservation as a saint they'd have to kneel to. But they were going to have me. And I'd be carved in pure gold. With ruby lips. And my toenails would be little pink ocean shells, which they would have to stoop down off their high horse to kiss.

I was ignorant. I was near age fourteen. The sky is just about the size of my ignorance. And just as pure. And that—the pure wideness of my ignorance—is what got me up the hill to the Sacred Heart Convent and brought me back down alive. For maybe Jesus did not take my bait, but them Sisters tried to cram me right down whole.

You ever see a walleye strike so bad the lure is practically out its back end before you reel it in? That is what they done with me. I don't like to make that low comparison, but I have seen a walleye do that once. And it's the same attempt as Sister Leopolda made to get me in her clutch.

I had the mail-order Catholic soul you get in a girl raised out in the bush, whose only thought is getting into town. Sunday Mass is the only time my father brought his children in except for school, when we were harnessed. Our souls went cheap. We were so anxious to get there we would have walked in on our hands and knees. We just craved going to the store, slinging bottle caps in the dust, making fool eyes at each other. And of course we went to church.

Where they have the convent is on top of the highest hill, so that from its windows the Sisters can be looking into the marrow of the town. Recently a windbreak was planted before the bar “for the purposes of tornado insurance.” Don't tell me that. That poplar stand was put up to hide the drinkers as they get the transformation. As they are served into the beast of their burden. While they're drinking, that body comes upon them, and then they stagger or crawl out the bar door, pulling a weight they can't

move past the poplars. They don't want no holy witness to their fall.

Anyway, I climbed. That was a long-ago day. A road for wagons wound in ruts to the top of the hill where they had their buildings of brick painted gleaming white. So white the sun glanced off in dazzling display to set forms whirling behind your eyelids. The face of God you could hardly look at. But that day it drizzled, so I could look all I wanted. I saw the homelier side. The cracked whitewash, and swallows nesting in the busted ends of eaves. I saw the boards sawed the size of broken windowpanes and the fruit trees, stripped. Only the tough wild rhubarb flourished. Golden-rod rubbed up their walls. It was a poor convent. I know that now. Compared with others it was humble, ragtag, out in the middle of no place. It was the end of the world to some. Where the maps stopped. Where God had only half a hand in the Creation. Where the Dark One had put in thick bush, liquor, wild dogs, and Indians.

I heard later that the Sacred Heart Convent was a place for nuns that don't get along elsewhere. Nuns that complain too much or lose their mind. I'll always wonder now, after hearing that, where they picked up Sister Leopolda. Perhaps she had scarred someone else, the way she left a mark on me. Perhaps she was just sent around to test her sisters' faith, here and there, like the spot-checker in a factory. For she was a definite hard trial for anyone, even for those who started out with veils of wretched love upon their eyes.

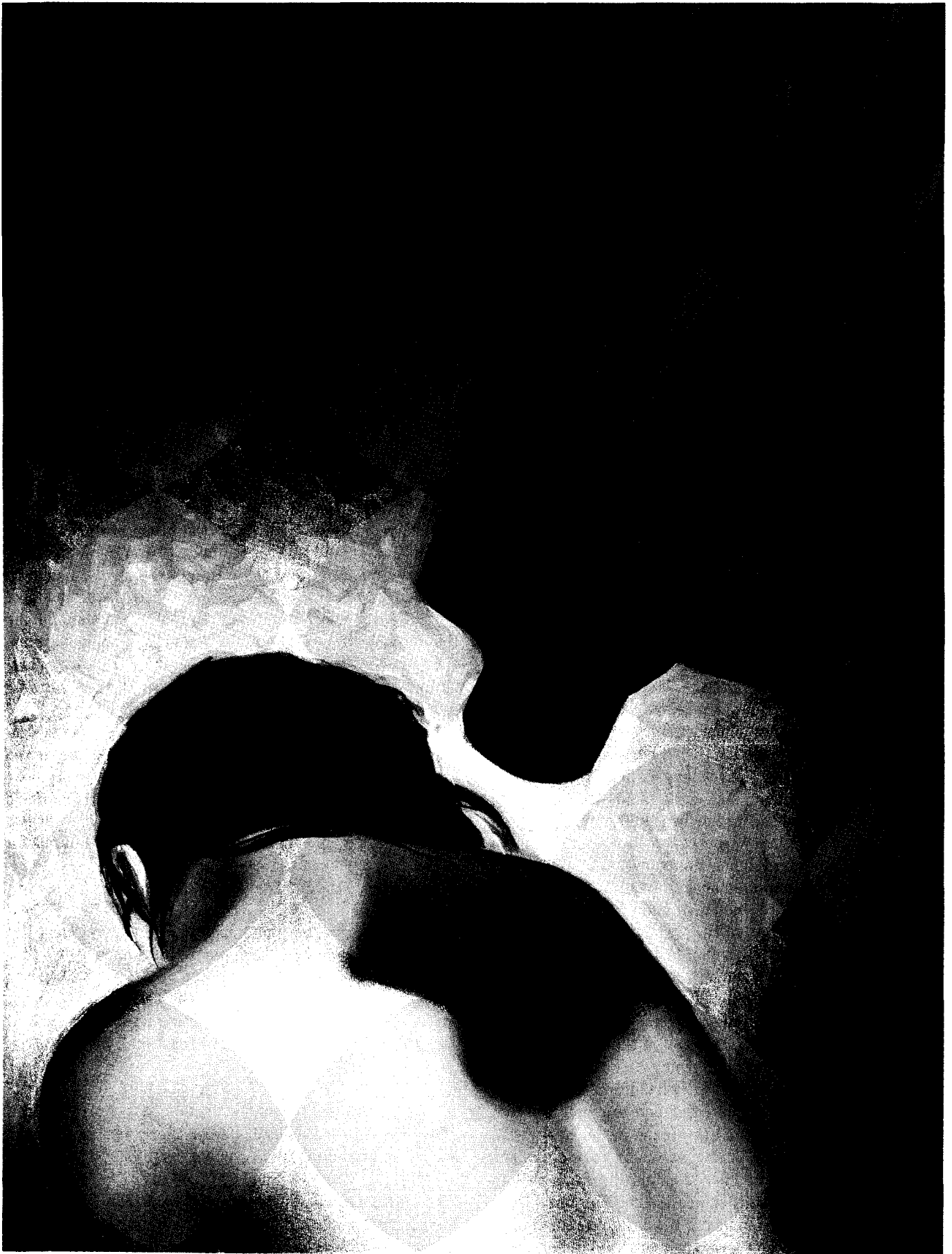
I was that girl who thought the hem of her black garment would help me rise. Veils of love, which was only hate petrified by longing, that was me. I was like those bush Indians who stole the holy black hat of a Jesuit and swallowed little scraps of it to cure their fevers. But the hat itself carried smallpox, and it was killing them with belief. Veils of faith! I had this confidence in Leopolda. She was different. The other Sisters had long ago gone blank and given up on Satan. He slept for them. They never noticed his comings and goings. But Leopolda kept track of him and knew his habits, the minds he burrowed in, the deep spaces where he hid. She knew as much about him as my grandma, who called him by other names and was not afraid.

In her class, Sister Leopolda carried a long oak pole for opening high windows. On one end it had a hook made of iron that could jerk a patch of your hair out or throttle you

Louise Erdrich is a Turtle Mountain Chippewa. Her first novel, Love Medicine, will be published this year.

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by the collar—all from a distance. She used this deadly hook-pole for catching Satan by surprise. He could have entered without your knowing it—through your lips or your nose or any one of your seven openings—and gained your mind. But she would see him. That pole would brain you from behind. And he would gasp, dazzled, and take the first thing she offered, which was pain.

She had a string of children who could breathe only if she said the word. I was the worst of them. She always said the Dark One wanted me most of all, and I believed this. I stood out. Evil was a common thing I trusted. Before sleep sometimes he came and whispered conversation in the old language of the bush. I listened. He told me things he never told anyone but Indians. I was privy to both worlds of his knowledge. I listened to him but, still, I had confidence in Leopolda. For she was the only one of the bunch he even noticed.

There came a day, though, when Leopolda turned the tide with her hook-pole.

It was a quiet day, with all of us working at our desks, when I heard him. He had sneaked into the closets in the back of the room. He was scratching around, tasting crumbs in our pockets, stealing buttons, squirting his dark juice in the linings and the boots. I was the only one who heard him, and I got bold. I smiled. I glanced back and smiled, and looked up at her sly to see if she had noticed. My heart jumped. For she was looking straight at me. And she sniffed. She had a big, stark, bony nose stuck to the front of her face, for smelling out brimstone and evil thoughts. She had smelled him on me. She stood up. Tall, pale, a blackness leading into the deeper blackness of the slate wall behind her. Her oak pole had flown into her grip. She had seen me glance at the closet. Oh, she knew. She knew just where he was. I watched her watch him in her mind's eye. The whole class was watching now. She was staring, sizing, following his scuffle. And all of a sudden she tensed down, poised on her bent kneesprings, cocked her arm back. She threw the oak pole singing over my head. It cracked through the thin wood door of the back closet and the heavy pointed hook drove through his heart. I turned. She'd speared her own black rubber overboot where he'd taken refuge, in the tip of her darkest toe.

Something howled in my mind. Loss and darkness. I understood. I was to suffer for my smile.

He rose up hard in my heart. I didn't blink when the pole cracked. My skull was tough. I didn't flinch when she shrieked in my ear. I only shrugged at the flowers of hell. He wanted me. More than anything he craved me. But then she did the worst. She did what broke my mind to her. She grabbed me by the collar and dragged me, feet flying, through the room and threw me in the closet with her dead black overboot. And I was there. The only light was a crack beneath the door. I asked the Dark One to enter into me and alert my mind. I asked him to restrain my tears, for they were pushing behind my eyes. But he was afraid to come back there. He was afraid of her sharp

pole. And I was afraid of Leopolda's pole, too, for the first time. I felt the cold hook in my heart. It could crack through the door at any minute and drag me out, like a dead fish on a gaff, drop me on the floor like a gutshot squirrel.

I was nothing. I edged back to the wall as far as I could. I breathed the chalk dust. The hem of her full black cloak cut against my cheek. He had left me. Her spear could find me any time. Her keen ears would aim the hook into the beat of my heart.

What was that sound?

It filled the closet, filled it up until it spilled over, but I did not recognize the crying wailing voice as mine until the door cracked open, I saw brightness, and she hoisted me to her camphor-smelling lips.

"He *wants* you," she said. "That's the difference. I give you love."

Love. The black hook. The spear singing through the mind. I saw that she had tracked the Dark One to my heart and flushed him out into the open. So now my heart was an empty nest where she could lurk.

Well, I was weak. I was weak when I let her in but she got a foothold there. Hard to dislodge as the months passed. Sometimes I felt him—the brush of dim wings—but only rarely did his voice compel. It was between Marie and Leopolda now, and the struggle changed. I began to realize I had been on the wrong track with the fruits of hell. The real way to overcome Leopolda was this: I'd get to heaven first. And then, when I saw her coming, I'd shut the gate. She'd be out! That is why, besides the bowing and the scraping I'd be dealt, I wanted to sit on the altar as a saint.

To this end, I went on up the hill. Sister Leopolda was the consecrated nun who had sponsored me to come there.

"You're not vain," she had said. "You're too honest, looking into the mirror, for that. You're not smart. You don't have the ambition to get clear. You have two choices. One, you can marry a no-good Indian, bear his brats, die like a dog. Or two, you can give yourself to God."

"I'll come up there," I said, "but not because of what you think."

I could have had any damn man on the reservation at the time. And I could have made him treat me like his own life. I looked good. And I looked white. But I wanted Sister Leopolda's heart. And here was the thing: Sometimes I wanted her heart in love and admiration. Sometimes. And sometimes I wanted her heart to roast on a black stick.

SHE ANSWERED THE BACK DOOR, WHERE THEY HAD instructed me to call. I stood there with my bundle. She looked me up and down.

"All right," she said finally. "Come in."

She took my hand. Her fingers were like a bundle of broom straws, so thin and dry, but the strength of them was unnatural. I couldn't have tugged loose if she had been

leading me into rooms of white-hot coal. Her strength was a kind of perverse miracle, for she got it from fasting herself thin. Because of this hunger practice her lips were a wounded brown and her skin was deadly pale. Her eye sockets were two deep, lashless hollows. I told you about the nose. It stuck out far and made the place her eyes moved even deeper, as if she stared out of a gun barrel. She took the bundle from my hands and threw it in the corner.

"You'll be sleeping behind the stove, child."

It was immense, like a great furnace. A small cot was close behind it.

"Looks like it could get warm there," I said.

"Hot. It does."

"Do I get a habit?"

I wanted something like the thing she wore. Flowing black cotton. Her face was strapped in white bandages and a sharp crest of starched cardboard hung over her forehead like a glaring beak. If possible, I wanted a bigger, longer, whiter beak than hers.

"No," she said, grinning her great skull grin. "You don't get one yet. Who knows, you might not like us. Or we might not like you."

But she had loved me, or offered me love. And she had tried to hunt the Dark One down. So I had this confidence.

"I'll inherit your keys from you," I said.

She looked at me sharply, and her grin turned strange. She hissed, taking in her breath. Then she turned to the door and took a key from her belt. It was a giant key, and it unlocked the larder, where the food was stored.

Inside were all kinds of good stuff. Things I'd tasted only once or twice in my life. I saw sticks of dried fruit, jars of orange peel, spices like cinnamon. I saw tins of crackers with ships painted on the side. I saw pickles. Jars of herring and the rind of pigs. Cheese, a big brown block of it from the thick milk of goats. And the everyday stuff, in great quantities, the flour and the coffee.

The cheese got to me. When I saw it my stomach hollowed. My tongue dripped. I loved that goat-milk cheese better than anything I'd ever eaten. I stared at it. The rich curve in the buttery cloth.

"When you inherit my keys," she said sourly, slamming the door in my face, "you can eat all you want of the priest's cheese."

Then she seemed to consider what she'd done. She looked at me. She took the key from her belt and went back, sliced a hunk off, and put it in my hand.

"If you're good you'll taste this cheese again. When I'm dead and gone," she said.

Then she dragged out the big sack of flour. When I finished that heavenly stuff she told me to roll my sleeves up and begin doing God's labor. For a while we worked in silence, mixing up dough and pounding it out on stone slabs.

"God's work," I said after a while. "If this is God's work, then I've done it all my life."

"Well, you've done it with the Devil in your heart, then," she said. "Not God."

"How do you know?" I asked. But I knew she did. And I wished I had not brought up the subject.

"I see right into you like a clear glass," she said. "I always did."

"You don't know it," she continued after a while, "but he's come around here sulking. He's come around here brooding. You brought him in. He knows the smell of me and he's going to make a last-ditch try to get you back. Don't let him," she glared over at me. Her eyes were cold and lighted. "Don't let him touch you. We'll be a long time getting rid of him."

So I was careful. I was careful not to give him an inch. I said a rosary, two rosaries, three, underneath my breath. I said the Creed. I said every scrap of Latin I knew while we punched the dough with our fists. And still, I dropped the cup. It rolled under that monstrous iron stove, which was getting fired up for baking.

And she was on me. She saw he'd entered my distraction.

"Our good cup," she said. "Get it out of there, Marie."

I reached for the poker to snag it out from beneath the stove. But I had a sinking feeling in my stomach as I did this. Sure enough, her long arm darted past me like a whip. The poker landed in her hand.

"Reach," she said. "Reach with your arm for that cup. And when your flesh is hot, remember that the flames you feel are only one fraction of the heat you will feel in his hellish embrace."

She always did things this way, to teach you lessons. So I wasn't surprised. It was playacting anyway, because a stove isn't very hot underneath, right along the floor. They aren't made that way. Otherwise, a wood floor would burn. So I said yes and got down on my stomach and reached under. I meant to grab it quick and jump up again, before she could think up another lesson, but here it happened. Although I groped for the cup, my hand closed on nothing. That cup was nowhere to be found. I heard her step toward me, a slow step. I heard the creak of thick shoe leather, the little *plat* as the folds of her heavy skirts met, a trickle of fine sand sifting somewhere, perhaps in the bowels of her, and I was afraid. I tried to scramble up, but her foot came down lightly behind my ear, and I was lowered. The foot came down more firmly at the base of my neck, and I was held.

"You're like I was," she said. "He wants you very much."

"He doesn't want me no more," I said. "He had his fill. I got the cup!"

I heard the valve opening, the hissed intake of breath, and knew that I should not have spoken.

"You lie," she said. "You're cold. There is a wicked ice forming in your blood. You don't have a shred of devotion for God. Only wild, cold, dark lust. I know it. I know how you feel. I see the beast . . . the beast watches me out of your eyes sometimes. Cold."

The urgent scrape of metal. It took a moment to know from where. Top of the stove. Kettle. She was steadying

herself with the iron poker. I could feel it like pure certainty, driving into the wood floor. I would not remind her of pokers. I heard the water as it came, tipped from the spout, cooling as it fell but still scalding as it struck. I must have twitched beneath her foot because she steadied me, and then the poker nudged up beside my arm as if to guide. "To warm your cold-ash heart," she said. I felt how patient she would be. The water came. My mind was dead blank. Again. I could only think the kettle would be cooling slowly in her hand. I could not stand it. I bit my lip so as not to satisfy her with a sound. She gave me more reason to keep still.

"I will boil him from your mind if you make a peep," she said, "by filling up your ear."

Any sensible fool would have run back down the hill the minute Leopolda let them up from under her heel. But I was snared in her black intelligence by then. I could not think straight. I had prayed so hard I think I broke a cog in my mind. I prayed while her foot squeezed my throat. While my skin burst. I prayed even when I heard the wind come through, shrieking in the busted bird nests. I didn't stop when pure light fell, turning slowly behind my eyelids. God's face. Even that did not disrupt my continued praise. Words came. Words came from nowhere and flooded my mind.

Now I could pray much better than any one of them. Than all of them full force. This was proved. I turned to

her in a daze when she let me up. My thoughts were gone, and yet I remember how surprised I was. Tears glittered in her eyes, deep down, like the sinking reflection in a well.

"It was so hard, Marie," she gasped. Her hands were shaking. The kettle clattered against the stove. "But I have used all the water up now. I think he is gone."

"I prayed," I said foolishly. "I prayed very hard."

"Yes," she said. "My dear one, I know."

WE SAT TOGETHER QUIETLY BECAUSE WE HAD NO more words. We let the dough rise and punched it down once. She gave me a bowl of mush, unlocked the sausage from a special cupboard, and took that in to the Sisters. They sat down the hall, chewing their sausage, and I could hear them. I could hear their teeth bite through their bread and meat. I couldn't move. My shirt was dry but the cloth stuck to my back and I couldn't think straight. I was losing the sense to understand how her mind worked. She'd gotten past me with her poker and I would never be a saint. I despaired. I felt I had no inside voice, nothing to direct me, no darkness, no Marie. I was about to throw that cornmeal mush out to the birds and make a run for it, when the vision rose up blazing in my mind.

I was rippling gold. My breasts were bare and my nip-



LISTING

I felt life coming on
Like a stealthy small zephyr,
As if something were imminent,
But I did not have a piece
Of paper.

Wildly bewildered, no paper to
Write on, life was coming on,
Inviting, enticing, incredibly fleet,
It was already flying away, no paper
To write on.

Such imaginary feats and excellences
Ravished my being that I could not say
What they were, or how extraordinary,
Because I was fumbling and could not find
Paper to write on.

Then I thought of my very self, and you
Who would read the paper that I would cite
And had a belief that this was tricky
Asking you to believe my mystery
Without poetry,

Wordless poetry flowing right on
Without anything to write on.
Could anybody be so eventual
As to live only in the sensual
Anon?

Or be so conspiratorial
With the unincorporated ethereal
As to raid the world of sense,
Get at essence, not with a rapier
But paper?

—Richard Eberhart

ples flashed and winked. Diamonds tipped them. I could walk through panes of glass. I could walk through windows. She was at my feet, swallowing the glass after each step I took. I broke through another and another. The glass she swallowed ground and cut until her starved insides were only a subtle dust. She coughed. She coughed a cloud of dust. And then she was only a black rag that flapped off, snagged in bob wire, hung there for an age, and finally rotted into the breeze.

I saw this, mouth hanging open, gazing off into the waving trees.

"Get up!" she cried. "Stop dreaming. It is time to bake."

Two other Sisters had come in with her, wide women with hands like paddles. They were smoothing and evening out the firebox beneath the great jaws of the oven.

"Who is this one?" they asked Leopolda. "Is she yours?"

"She is mine," said Leopolda. "A very good girl."

"What is your name?" one asked me.

"Marie."

"Marie. Star of the Sea."

"She will shine," said Leopolda, "when we have burned off the dark corrosion."

The others laughed, but uncertainly. They were slow, heavy French, who did not understand Leopolda's twisted jokes, although they muttered respectfully at things she said. I knew they wouldn't believe what she had done with the kettle. So I kept quiet.

"*Elle est docile*," they said approvingly as they left to starch the linens.

"Does it pain?" Leopolda asked me as soon as they were out the door.

I did not answer. I felt sick with the hurt.

"Come along," she said.

The building was quiet now. I followed her up the narrow staircase into a hall of little rooms, many doors, like a hotel. Her cell was at the very end. Inside was a rough straw mattress, a tiny bookcase with a picture of Saint Francis hanging over it, a ragged palm, and a crucifix. She told me to remove my shirt and sit down on her mattress. I did so. She took a pot of salve from the bookcase and began to smooth it upon my burns. Her stern hand made slow, wide circles, stopping the pain. I closed my eyes. I expected to see the docile blackness. Peace. But instead the vision reared up again. My chest was still tipped with diamonds. I was walking through windows. She was chewing up the broken litter I left behind.

"I am going," I said. "Let me go."

But she held me down.

"Don't go," she said quickly. "Don't. We have just begun."

I was weakening. My thoughts were whirling pitifully. The pain had kept me strong, and as it left me I began to forget, I couldn't hold on. I began to wonder if she had really scalded me with the kettle. I could not remember. To remember this seemed the most important thing in the world. But I was losing the memory. The scalding. The

pouring. It began to vanish. I felt that my mind was coming off its hinge, flapping in the breeze, hanging by the hair of my own pain. I wrenched out of her grip.

"He was always in you," I said. "Even more than in me. He wanted you even more. And now he's got you. Get thee behind me!"

I shouted that, grabbed my shirt, and ran through the door, throwing the shirt on my body. I got down the stairs and into the kitchen, but no matter what I told myself, I couldn't get out the door. It wasn't finished. And she knew I would not leave. Her quiet step was immediately behind me.

"We must take the bread from the oven now," she said.

She was pretending nothing had happened. But for the first time I had gotten through some chink she'd left in her darkness. Touched some doubt. Her voice was so low and brittle it cracked off at the end of her sentence.

"Help me, Marie," she said slowly.

But I was not going to help her even though she calmly buttoned my shirt up and put the big cloth mittens in my hands for taking out the loaves. I could have bolted then. But I didn't. I knew that something was nearing completion. Something was about to happen. My back was a wall of singing flame. I was turning. I watched her take the long fork in one hand, to tap the loaves. In the other hand she gripped the black poker to hook the pans.

"Help me," she said again, and I thought, "Yes, this is part of it." I put the mittens on my hands and swung the door open on its hinges. The oven gaped. She stood back a moment, letting the first blast of heat rush by. I moved behind her. I could feel the heat at my front and at my back. Before, behind. My skin was turning to beaten gold. It was coming quicker than I had thought. The oven was like the gate of a personal hell. Just big enough and hot enough for one person, and that was her. One kick and Leopolda would fly in headfirst. And that would be one millionth of the heat she would feel when she finally collapsed in his hellish embrace.

Saints know these numbers.

She bent forward with her fork held out. I kicked her with all my might. She flew in. But the outstretched poker hit the back wall first, so she rebounded. The oven was not as deep as I had thought.

There was a moment when I felt a sort of thin, hot disappointment, as when a fish slips off the line. Only I was the one going to be lost. She was fearfully silent. She whirled. Her veil had cutting edges. She had the poker in one hand. In the other she held that long sharp fork she used to tap the delicate crusts of loaves. Her face turned upside-down on her shoulders. Her face turned blue. But saints are used to miracles. I felt no trace of fear.

If I was going to be lost, let the diamonds cut! Let her eat ground glass!

"Old she-devil bitch!" I shouted. "Kneel and beg! Lick the floor!"

That was when she stabbed me through the hand with

the fork, then took the poker up alongside my head and knocked me out.

I came around maybe half an hour later. Things were so strange. So strange I can hardly tell it for delight at the remembrance. For when I came around this was actually taking place. I was being worshiped. I had somehow gained the altar of a saint.

I was lying back on the stiff couch in the Mother Superior's office. I looked around me. It was as though my deepest dream had come to life. The Sisters of the convent were kneeling to me. Sister Bonaventure. Sister Dympna. Sister Cecilia Saint-Claire. The two with hands like paddles. They were down on their knees. Black capes were slung over some of their heads. My name was buzzing up and down the room like a fat autumn fly, lighting on the tips of the tongues between Latin, humming up the heavy, blood-dark curtains, circling their swaddled heads. Marie! Marie! A girl thrown in a closet. Who was afraid of a rubber overboot. Who was half overcome. A girl who came in the back door where they threw their garbage. Marie! Who never found the cup. Who had to eat their cold mush. Marie! Leopolda had her face buried in her knuckles. Saint Marie of the Holy Slops! Saint Marie of the Bread Fork! Saint Marie of the Burnt Back and Scalded Butt!

I broke out and laughed.

They looked up. All holy hell burst loose when they saw I was awake. I still did not understand what was happening. They were watching, talking, but not to me.

"The marks . . ."

"She has her hand closed."

"Je ne peux pas voir."

I was not stupid enough to ask what they were talking about. I couldn't tell why I was lying in white sheets. I couldn't tell why they were praying to me. But I'll tell you this. It seemed entirely natural. It was me. I lifted up my hand as in my dream. It was completely limp with sacredness.

"Peace be with you."

My arm was dried blood from the wrist down to the elbow. And it hurt. Their faces turned like fat flowers of adoration to follow that hand's movements. I let it swing through the air, imparting a saint's blessing. I had practiced. I knew exactly how to act.

They murmured. I heaved a sigh and a golden beam of light suddenly broke through the clouded window and flooded down directly on my face. A stroke of perfect luck! They had to be convinced.

Leopolda still knelt in the back of the room. Her knuckles were crammed halfway down her throat. Let me tell you, a saint has senses honed keen as a wolf's. I knew that she was over my barrel now. How it had happened did not matter. The last thing I remembered was that she flew from the oven and stabbed me. That one thing was most certainly true.

"Come forward, Sister Leopolda." I gestured with my

heavenly wound. Oh, it hurt. It bled when I reopened the place where it had begun to heal. "Kneel beside me," I said.

She kneeled, but her voice box evidently did not work, for her mouth opened, shut, opened, but no sound came out. My throat clenched in the noble delight I had read of as befitting a saint. She could not speak. But she was beaten. It was in her eyes. She stared at me now with all the deep hate of the wheel of devilish dust that rolled wild within her emptiness.

"What is it you want to tell me?" I asked. And at last she spoke.

"I have told my sisters of your passion," she managed to choke out. "How the stigmata . . . the marks of the nails . . . appeared in your palm and you swooned at the holy vision . . ."

"Yes," I said, curious.

And then, after a moment, I understood.

Leopolda had saved herself with her quick brain. She had witnessed a miracle. She had hid the fork and told this to the others. And of course they believed her, because they never knew how Satan came and went or where he took refuge.

"I saw it from the first," said the large one who had put the bread in the oven. "Humility of the spirit. So rare in these girls."

"I saw it too," said the other one with great satisfaction. She sighed quietly. "If only it was me."

Leopolda was kneeling bolt upright, face blazing and twitching, a barely held fountain of blasting poison.

"Christ has marked me," I agreed. I smiled a saint's smirk in her face. And then I looked at her. That was my mistake.

For I saw her kneeling there. Leopolda with her soul like a rubber overboot. With her face of a starved rat. With her desperate eyes drowning in the deep wells of her wrongness. There would be no one else after me. And I would leave. I saw Leopolda kneeling within the shambles of her love.

My heart had been about to surge from my chest with the blackness of my joyous heat. Now it dropped. I pitied her. I pitied her. Pity twisted in my stomach as if that hook-pole were driven through me at last. I was caught. It was a feeling more terrible than any amount of boiling water and worse than being forked. Still, still, I couldn't help what I did. I had already smiled in a saint's mealy forgiveness. I heard myself speaking gently.

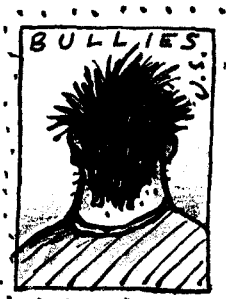
"Receive the dispensation of my sacred blood," I whispered.

But there was no heart in it. No joy when she bent to touch the floor. No dark leaping. I fell back onto the white pillows. Blank dust was whirling through the light shafts. My skin was dust. Dust my lips. Dust the dirty spoons on the ends of my feet.

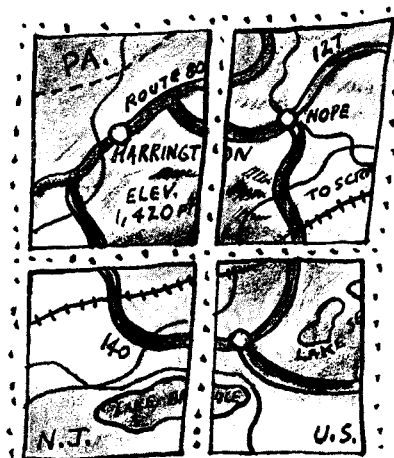
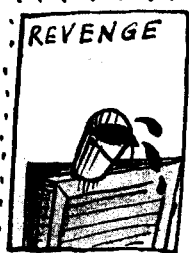
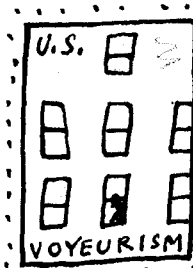
Rise up! I thought. Rise up and walk! There is no limit to this dust! □

STAMPS OF THE FUTURE

BY J. C. SUARÈS

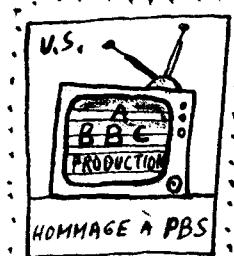
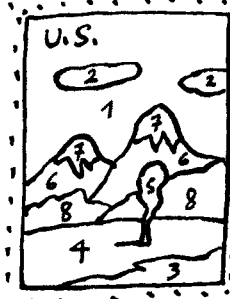


FORGOTTEN AMERICANS



MAP OF NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

COLOR YOUR OWN



COLLECTORS' ITEMS



INVERTED
WHITE HOUSE

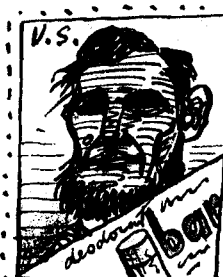


INVERTED
HOT DOG

JULIAN SCHNABEL STAMP



ADVERTISING



LINCOLN
AND BAN
DEODORANT AD



WHOOPING CRANE
AND OLD SPICE AD

Politics and price manipulations, some experts argue, have discouraged our use of a domestic fuel that would heat our homes, run our factories, and power our automobiles for less than we pay today

AMERICA'S PLENTIFUL ENERGY RESOURCE

BY DAVID OSBORNE

TEN YEARS AFTER THE ARAB OIL EMBARGO, THE goal of "energy independence" remains as elusive as ever. The United States continues to import some 6 million barrels of oil a day, sending at least \$60 billion abroad every year. Meanwhile, Iran vows to close the Strait of Hormuz—through which flows 35 percent of all oil traded in international markets—if Iraq's new Eten-dard jets attack Iranian oil installations.

As we wait helplessly for Iran's next move or OPEC's next embargo, however, the means to attain our goal lies hidden beneath our feet. Here in the lower forty-eight states, a resource exists that could sharply reduce our dependence on foreign oil within a matter of years. Unlike oil, this resource is still available in immense quantities. Unlike coal, it is so clean that we burn it in our kitchens. Unlike nuclear energy, it is safe and reliable. And unlike solar power, it is free of technological hurdles that might stand in the way of its exploitation.

This ideal resource is methane—in common parlance, natural gas. Methane is our quiet fuel: it heats more than half of American homes and powers more industry than oil or coal, yet it rarely makes news. For uses other than transportation, it is our most important fuel—and it could also power many automobiles if the shift had to be made. Italy and New Zealand boast several hundred thousand methane-powered automobiles; France, Egypt, Argentina, and Pakistan have initiated conversion programs; Canada is paying its citizens to switch, in the hope of seeing 2.5 million methane-powered cars by 1992. Here at home, hundreds of business fleets have been converted, and Ford is turning out cars designed to run on methane—which normally costs far less than gasoline at the pump.

If methane is so efficient and so economical, one might ask, why have we heard so little about it? The answer is depressingly simple: five years ago, many energy experts believed we were running out of natural gas.

This notion gained currency during the winters of 1976 and 1977, when pipelines to the Midwest and the Northeast ran short of gas. In the winter of 1977, one of the coldest in memory, a million people were thrown out of

work, at least briefly, as gas-starved factories and schools were forced to close. Frightened by this calamity, and eager to sell Congress on the need for higher gas prices, Carter Administration officials insisted that by the end of the 1980s—*within thirteen years*—the nation's gas reservoirs would begin to run dry.

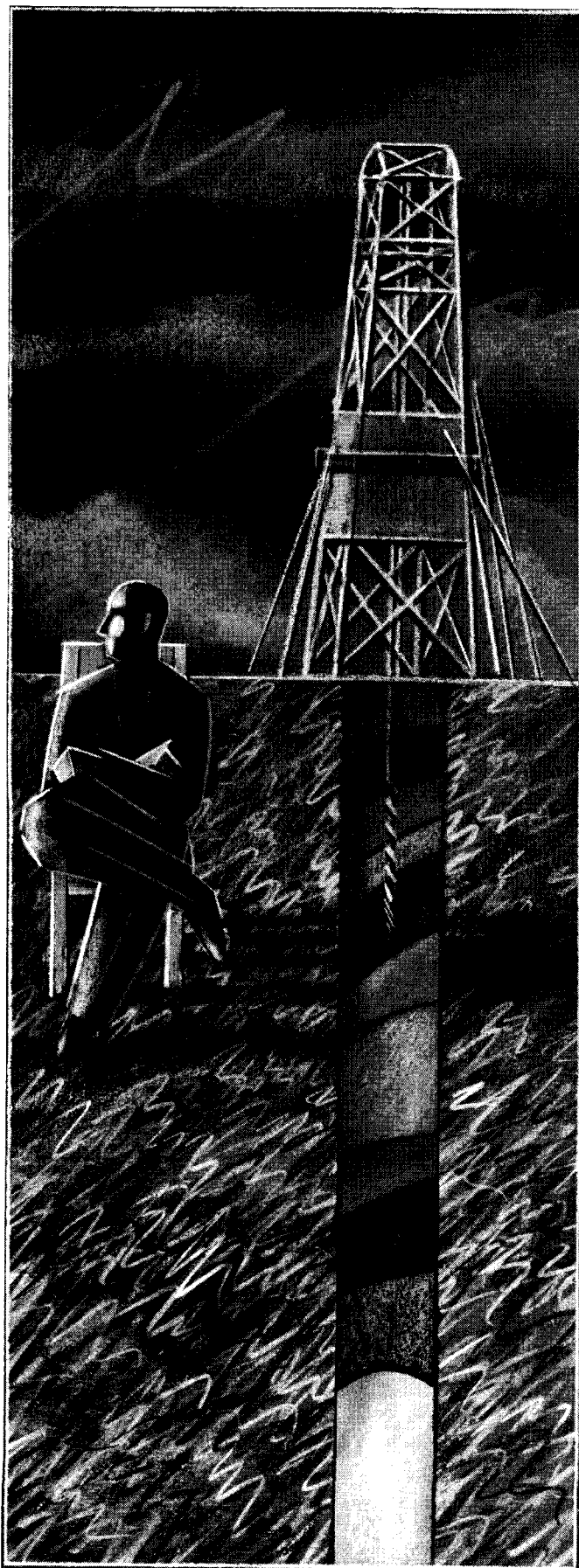
Today, the nation is experiencing a glut of gas so severe that producers are capping wells by the thousands. Respected authorities estimate that we have a seventy-five-year reserve, while visionaries speak in terms of hundreds of years.

Much of the gas was discovered during the drilling binge stimulated by the partial decontrol of gas prices in 1978. But even before decontrol, while the Carter Administration was still spreading its message of doom, drillers were hitting vast pockets of gas. The secret was depth: for years, petroleum geologists had assumed that no gas could exist below 20,000 feet (roughly four miles); today, the largest deposits are believed to be near or below that depth. "Any hole you drill in the deep Anadarko Basin [in Oklahoma] is going to produce some amount of natural gas," says Robert Hefner III, the Oklahoma driller who proved the experts wrong. "Below about 15,000 feet, the sediments are saturated."

Most experts agree that the greater Anadarko Basin will produce at least 140 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of gas—beyond the 60 tcf or so (most of it shallow gas) it has already produced. At the consumption rate that prevailed before the recent recession—20 tcf per year—this translates into at least seven years' supply for the entire nation. And the Anadarko is only one of many deep basins, most of which lie virtually unexplored. Vast quantities of gas in shallower reservoirs also await development. In addition, both Canada and Mexico have reserves that may well be as large as ours; the United States could import far more from those countries than the one tcf per year it imports today.

And if all of these sources are not enough, immense reserves of "geopressured" gas are dissolved in hot, deep waters under Louisiana, Texas, and the Gulf of Mexico. If this gas can be produced at a price low enough to make it commercially feasible, it could conceivably supply all apparent needs for a thousand years.

David Osborne is a free-lance writer with a special interest in political and economic affairs. He is at work on a book about energy.



To put all this in perspective, one must add that gas exploration is still in its infancy. Until 1978, when the gradual decontrol of new-gas prices was initiated, most of our gas had been discovered inadvertently, during the search for oil. Except in a handful of states, the industry did not actively look for gas before five years ago. Spurred on by prices that have risen sharply in that period, drillers have since sunk wells everywhere from Oregon to New York—and have found gas. Oil does not normally survive the fiery temperatures found below 15,000 feet; hence a century of shallow drilling may have already drained a good deal of our oil reserves, at least in the lower forty-eight states. But we have just scratched the surface of our potential gas supplies.

Geologists have known this for several years. In 1981, the presidents of the American Gas Association and the Gas Research Institute, along with Robert Hefner and other drillers, said as much to a congressional subcommittee. They also described what we should do next: increase our production of gas; develop technologies to tap the geopressed gold mine under the Gulf Coast; substitute gas for some of our midwestern coal, to cut down on acid rain; and start converting our auto fleet to methane. By raising our natural-gas consumption by just 33 percent, we could replace 2 million barrels of imported oil per day, keeping \$20 billion a year from going abroad, creating thousands of jobs, and pouring perhaps \$6 billion in taxes and royalties into the federal treasury.

Nothing is ever quite that simple, of course. And conversion to natural gas is proving to be the opposite of simple. Since 1981, domestic gas has *lost* ground to foreign oil. During our first natural-gas glut in decades, consumption has plummeted and prices have skyrocketed, thwarting the laws of supply and demand. Cheap gas has been shut in the ground while expensive gas has been produced. The cost of heating with gas has doubled in just four years. The natural-gas market, it appears, has lost all semblance of rationality.

Congress, bewildered by this upside-down world, is not sure where to turn. In the confusion, the Reagan Administration has seized the initiative, proposing to decontrol *all* gas prices and return gas to a presumably free market. As so often happens, crisis has triggered not innovative thinking but conventional wisdom, bringing forth strategies developed to meet yesterday's problems. In this case, the proposed solution is not merely irrelevant; it will probably make matters worse.

TO UNDERSTAND HOW WE COULD GO FROM SHORTAGE to glut in the space of a few years, we must understand the effect of federal price controls on the natural-gas industry.

Interstate gas pipelines were placed under federal regulation in 1938, soon after they began snaking their way across the country. Like utilities, pipelines are what econo-

mists call “natural monopolies.” Since it would be wasteful to build three or four pipelines to serve the same route (as it would be wasteful for three or four gas utilities, each with its own labyrinth of underground pipes, to serve the same customers), most areas are supplied by one or, at most, two. Thus, once a utility signs up with a pipeline, it is stuck; if prices for gas from that pipeline are raised, the utility has nowhere to turn for cheaper supplies. Similarly, when the utility raises its rates, the individual consumer is powerless. Free from competition, both utilities and pipelines could impose huge rate increases on their customers if the prices they charge were not regulated.

In 1954, when the state of Wisconsin sued Phillips Petroleum for price-fixing, the United States Supreme Court extended federal price controls from pipelines to producers of gas. It based its decision largely on investigations by the Federal Power Commission, which had found creeping monopolization in the gas fields as the major oil companies came to dominate the industry. In any given field, according to FPC data, only one, two, or three companies produced gas, and only one pipeline bought it—hardly an indication of the thriving competition upon which a free-enterprise system depends to keep prices in line.

The oil companies have fought price controls since the late forties, when they were first proposed in Congress. Twice during the fifties the industry pushed decontrol bills through Congress, only to see them vetoed—once by President Truman, once by President Eisenhower. During the sixties, the struggle moved back to the courts. In 1968, the Supreme Court ruled, as it had in 1954, that the intent of the Natural Gas Act justified price controls on producers as well as pipelines, once more citing the absence of true competition in the gas fields.

Because the 1938 act applied only to pipelines in *interstate* commerce, however, price controls were never extended to gas that did not cross state lines. In 1973, when OPEC quadrupled the price of its oil, this unregulated *intrastate* gas started to follow oil up the price ladder. The reason is simple: in industrial markets, which account for more than 50 percent of all gas consumption, gas competes with oil. As long as industries that can just as easily use gas must pay more for oil, natural gas obviously will be in great demand. Where gas prices are not controlled, rising demand will pull them up—as it did in Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma, the producing states with the biggest internal markets.

By 1975, intrastate prices were up to \$1.40 per thousand cubic feet (mcf), two and a half times the interstate price. Being intelligent businessmen, gas producers were more interested in selling their gas for \$1.40 than for 57 cents. When they could not get the higher price, they often chose not to sell at all, preferring to await better days. Soon new interstate sales began to dwindle; pipelines had already begun curtailing sales to industrial users. By 1977, the shortage was severe enough to close schools and factories. Meanwhile, Louisiana and Texas were floating in gas.

Anyone familiar with the gas industry understood that the shortage was artificial, a result of the unwillingness of gas producers to sell at controlled prices. Less astute observers looked at the industry's figures for “proven” reserves, which were steadily falling, and concluded that the nation was running out of gas.

Ever since the 1968 Supreme Court decision, the industry had warned that the continued imposition of price controls would limit gas production and create a shortage. Sure enough, as early as 1969, figures for annual reserves began to decline, a trend that was to last for a decade. Suspicious of a possible connection, the Senate Antitrust and Monopoly Subcommittee asked the Federal Trade Commission to investigate the reliability of these industry figures. Most companies whose books were subpoenaed refused to cooperate. The books of those who agreed, however, clearly revealed manipulation of reserves figures: one set of numbers, the highest ones, went to the banks to facilitate loans; a middle set went to the Internal Revenue Service; and the lowest figures went to the American Gas Association, which published the national totals.

As the shortage of gas available for interstate sale became more acute, however, few among the public or the press were aware of these manipulations. The average person likewise failed to understand the limited importance of the industry's declining figures, accurate or not. Proven reserves—the estimated amount of gas that can be pumped out of the ground from proven reservoirs at existing prices—are nothing more than inventory. When newspaper inventories fall, the paper industry does not declare that we are running out of trees. But when gas inventories fell, the oil industry announced that the nation was running out of gas. In 1974, Mobil and Shell warned that we had enough gas left for only twenty to thirty years; in 1976, Exxon's estimate was fifteen to twenty years. Meanwhile, United States Geological Survey (USGS) estimates ranged from forty-four to a hundred years. Even the CIA got into the act, concluding, in 1977, that we had fifty to sixty years' supply. The perception of shortage did not, of course, damage the case the oil companies were busy making before Congress: that if they were to get every last drop out of the ground, prices had to be decontrolled.

TO MOST PEOPLE, A SHORTAGE WAS A SHORTAGE. President Carter was no exception. Dismissing as absurd the deep-gas drillers who came to Washington with tales of plenty, the Carter Administration bought the oil companies' line: that most of the cheap, shallow gas had already been found; that gas did not generally exist below 15,000 or 20,000 feet; and that future drilling would yield ever less at ever higher prices. But even as Carter was preparing his major energy address (which became known as the Chicken Little speech, for its “the sky is falling” tone), government scientists were gathering data that contradicted it.

Initial reports from deep wells in the Anadarko Basin and the Rocky Mountain Overthrust Belt indicated enormous reserves of gas. And when Vincent McKelvey, then the director of the USGS, examined data on the geopressured zone under the Gulf Coast, he discovered "almost incomprehensibly large" deposits of natural gas. The geopressured reserves, even by low estimates, he announced in a 1977 speech, amounted to "about ten times the energy value of all oil, gas, and coal reserves in the U.S. combined." No one knew whether the geopressured gas could be economically produced, however. When Dr. Christian Knudsen, a former Exxon scientist who joined the Federal Energy Administration in 1974, ran a reserves study for the Department of Energy, he ignored the geopressured reserves. Playing down the potential of deep gas, as well, Knudsen nevertheless concluded that the United States held enough gas to last us well into the next century.

The good news was not welcome at the Department of Energy, for it contradicted the reasoning behind the entire Carter energy program, built as that program was on conservation, higher prices, and synthetic fuels. When Knudsen's conclusions became known, a consultant from Penn. State University was called in to double-check his data. To the chagrin of Knudsen's superiors, the consultant concluded that Knudsen was being too conservative. Frustrated, the DOE next brought in an expert from Shell Oil, who did suggest that some figures in the report should be significantly lower, to conform with a supply curve from the Stanford Research Institute—a curve whose assumptions Knudsen was never allowed to examine. Finally, a week after Knudsen had presented his final report, he was called into Deputy Secretary John O'Leary's office for a dressing-down. Over the weekend preceding Carter's energy speech, the report was frantically rewritten to support the Administration's position. Knudsen, meanwhile, was fired.

Vincent McKelvey soon met a similar fate. After two speeches describing natural-gas reserves in terms that far surpassed those used by the DOE, McKelvey was asked for his resignation. To this day, he has been given no explanation. Those around him, however, never doubted that his position on gas reserves cost him his job.

Knudsen and McKelvey were not the only people talking about plentiful supplies. Executives from gas-producing companies also came to Washington to spread the good news about gas. Rather than investigate their reports, however, President Carter turned down the thermostat, put on a sweater, and pushed several important bills through Congress.

Two dealt with natural gas. The Powerplant and Industrial Fuel Use Act, an attempt to conserve our supplies of fuel for home heating, sharply restricted the use of gas by utilities and industry. The Natural Gas Policy Act (NGPA), an effort to encourage new production, gradually raised prices for all gas from wells begun after 1977, and mandated final decontrol of this "new" gas in 1985. Carter's bill

also eliminated the dual market for gas, imposing interstate prices on intrastate gas. And, largely through the efforts of Robert Hefner, Congress immediately decontrolled gas extracted from depths greater than 15,000 feet.

Unfortunately, the two bills had contradictory results. The NGPA brought in gushers of new gas, while the Fuel Use Act helped constrict the market for it.

The higher prices allowed under the NGPA immediately brought forth a surge of new gas, proving that the shortage had been an artificial one. The prospect of rising profits also brought on the biggest drilling binge in the industry's history. Stirred by visions of OPEC oil hitting \$100 a barrel, speculators armed with bank loans sank hundreds of wells in the Anadarko and the Rocky Mountain Overthrust Belt. One vast field after another turned up in the deep basins, and significant new supplies were found even in shallow fields. Normally, wildcatters consider themselves lucky if one out of ten wells produces; during the late seventies, *seven* out of ten deep wells in the Anadarko hit gas. This one basin produced 6 trillion cubic feet of new gas in four years, or roughly one twelfth of total U.S. consumption during the period. Total additions to reserves in the lower forty-eight states increased from an average of less than 10 tcf during the seventies to more than 20 in 1981, as the decontrolled gas became available.

Why the sudden discovery of gushers below 15,000 feet, after years of declining reserves? The obvious answer is that before deep gas was deregulated, very few wells had been drilled below 15,000 feet. More to the point, once the depths were probed, they turned out to be literally saturated with gas.

The geological explanation for this auspicious circumstance exhibits the pleasing simplicity of science. At 12,000 to 15,000 feet in most sedimentary basins, the weight of the overlying rock becomes so great that all porosity in the sediments is squeezed shut, creating a relatively impermeable layer. For many years, geologists assumed that beneath this level porosity remained close to zero, except in very unusual circumstances. The deep drilling of the past decade has found just the opposite, however: below the impermeable layer, porosity suddenly increases as the sediments become saturated with gas under great pressure—the so-called "geopressured" gas.

The impermeable layer acts as a seal. As gas accumulates, it cannot move toward the surface, as it would in shallower regions. Only when an enormous amount of gas has built up, creating pressure great enough to fracture the rocks, can it burst through toward the surface. As a result, since gas has been accumulating over eons, the geopressured zone is likely to be full today.

Above 12,000 to 15,000 feet, the situation is quite different. Accumulating gas will always escape to the surface unless it is trapped by a "cap rock"—a nonporous stratum of rock whose shape allows gas to collect beneath it. Cap rocks are present only in a tiny fraction of the upper domain, however. Consequently, most gas originating above

the geopressured zone eventually escapes, venting into the atmosphere or the oceans.

Dr. Paul H. Jones, who spent thirty-three years with the USGS, has actually mapped the impermeable layer in the Gulf Coast area, using data from thousands of wells to show the depth at which porosity suddenly increases. Many geologists, however, still believe that porosity must decrease the deeper one drills. When it increases, they label it a "pressure anomaly," a local exception. But the facts now suggest otherwise, and conventional opinion is shifting as the industry gains experience drilling for deep gas.

PERHAPS THE NATION'S MOST AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE on gas supplies is the Potential Gas Committee, whose members represent all branches of the industry, as well as the government and academia. As of the end of 1982, the committee estimated, the United States held 875 tcf of conventional undiscovered gas, plus roughly 200 tcf of proven reserves. Conservative estimates of the amount producible from tight-sand formations, coal seams, and other "unconventional" sources (excluding geopressured gas) are in the 400-to-500-tcf range, bringing total reserves and resources to between 1,500 and 1,600 tcf—a seventy-five-year supply at normal rates of consumption. Comparable resources may exist in Canada and Mexico. A few experts continue to dispute these figures, though most of the low-end estimates (in the 250-to-400-tcf range for conventional resources) were discredited by the surge of discoveries in the early eighties. The low estimates have two defects in common: they assume that gas and oil are similar, and they base projections for new discoveries on past trends. In reality, almost all oil is found above 15,000 feet and, as we now know, a great deal of gas is found below 15,000 feet. Drillers have been combing the country for oil for eighty years, whereas they have been actively searching for gas—and drilling deep—for only five. Predicting gas discoveries on the basis of past trends makes as much sense as predicting solar-energy production from the historical record.

Even the latest estimate by the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment perpetuates the errors. The OTA takes the path of least resistance, splitting the difference between low and high estimates with a range of 400 to 900 tcf, or twenty to forty-five years' supply. (The OTA figures are for conventional gas in the lower forty-eight states; thus they exclude hundreds of trillions of cubic feet in tight-sand formations, in coal seams, and in Alaska.) Neither the importance of deep gas nor the fledgling nature of gas exploration appears to be understood by the OTA authors. In addition, their predictions are based on "present and easily foreseeable technological and economic conditions." Presumably, technology will improve and prices will rise. To their credit, the authors tacitly admit these problems:

Furthermore, some scientists believe that those estimates that invoke current technology and economic relationships—the great majority—are simply irrelevant, *whether or not they are correct within the constraints of these assumptions*. These scientists believe that both the inexorable advance of technology and rising prices that reflect resource scarcity will constantly push outwards the boundaries of the recoverable resource base. As noted previously, the history of resource estimation in general tends to support this view; cycles of predictions of scarcity followed by radical upward revisions in resource assessments appear to be common for nonrenewable resources.

By this reasoning—which is little more than common sense—even the Potential Gas Committee's estimates will grow over time.

Guessing what is hidden deep within the earth will always be problematic. To temper our instincts for caution, however, we would be wise to look at the history of oil-supply predictions. In 1908, the USGS estimated maximum future U.S. supply at 23 billion barrels; in 1914, the Bureau of Mines dropped that figure to 6 billion. Today, more than 100 billion barrels have been produced. In 1920, the USGS director warned that U.S. production had almost reached its peak, sparking a decade of interest in synthetic-fuel production. The Department of the Interior sounded the alarm in 1931, 1939, and 1949. Yet by 1949 industry experts had far more experience as oil prospectors than their counterparts today have as gas prospectors.

Fifty years ago, few people imagined that we might someday drill for oil offshore or in Alaska. Today, analogous advances seem perfectly plausible. Consider the task of sinking a drill five miles into the earth, where pressure changes so suddenly and dramatically that wells are easily ruined. Ed Schmidt, an energy consultant who knows a great deal about the Anadarko Basin, compares deep-drilling technology today with aviation technology in the mid-thirties. The Boeing 747, he points out, is one hundred times as productive as the DC-3.

The gas resource that is most dependent on technological innovation is geopressured methane. None of the figures cited above include geopressured reserves, which most estimates put at between 3,000 and 100,000 tcf—or 150 to 5,000 years' supply. Unfortunately, however, geopressured gas is dissolved in hot salt water at relatively low densities, deep underground. To produce it, drillers must sink wells 12,000 feet or more, separate the gas and the water, and dispose of the water—perhaps by pumping it back down exhausted wells. None of this would be cheap. But even if only a fraction of this gas could be produced at market rates, it would change our supply picture dramatically.

Paul Jones, the nation's foremost expert (and most optimistic visionary) on geopressured gas, believes that the Gulf Coast region holds 50,000 tcf in the geopressured zone above a depth of 25,000 feet, plus more at deeper levels.



He thinks that a great deal of it can be tapped for commercial use. The numbers lead him to the conclusion that "we have more recoverable natural gas in the world than we will ever be able to use." "All of the petroliferous basins of the world are geopressed, and all of the geopressed waters are saturated in natural gas," Jones says. "The amount in the Gulf Basin alone staggers the mind."

During the late seventies, the government drilled a number of test wells in the geopressed zone. After encountering a series of technical difficulties, DOE officials concluded that the gas could not profitably be tapped at prevailing prices. But, according to Jones, the oilmen hired to run the tests used oil-well technology when they should have drilled water wells. Jones has patented a drilling process that, he says, will produce plenty of gas at market rates; it involves drilling deep enough to tap superheated water that will blow off as steam, releasing enough pressure to allow the gas to come out of solution in the reservoir. Since Jones has not been able to raise the capital necessary to test his ideas, however, no one knows whether they will work.

"Gas from the geopressed zone is by far the cheapest gas the country can produce," Jones says. "The deeper you go, the larger the gas reservoirs in terms of recoverable gas." Jones believes this is largely because gas grows dense under great pressure and expands considerably when brought to the surface. One deep well in Louisiana, Jones points out, produced 3.2 billion cubic feet (more than \$5 million worth of gas) in just twenty-nine days—roughly twenty-five times the flow rate of a good shallow well. On the basis of photographs of steam billowing out as the well first came in, Jones is convinced that the drill reached the geopressed zone, blowing off enough pressure to let the gas come out of solution deep underground.

For some reason—perhaps because we will not need geopressed gas for decades—the industry has largely ignored its potential. Yet most industry spokesmen assume that advancing technology and higher prices will eventually allow us to manufacture synthetic gas from coal. Separating gas from hot salt water ought to be much simpler.

INDUSTRY LEADERS SUCH AS HENRY LINDEN, President of the Gas Research Institute, and George Lawrence, president of the American Gas Association, believe we could increase our gas production 50 percent by the year 2000. Such opinions are rare among academic energy experts, however. Foundation and academic studies of future energy supplies invariably tip their hats to natural gas, and then ignore it. In part, this may be because the authors of such studies have generally been led into the subject by the oil crisis. "People who have been studying the oil markets tend not to be the same people who have studied the gas markets," explains Harry G. Broadman, of Resources for the Future, Inc., which administered a 1979 Ford Foundation study. "We're only now beginning to bridge the gap."

Many experts also have a decade-long investment in the argument for conservation, which could be undermined by tales of huge energy supplies. (In reality, both oil and gas are so expensive today that conservation is cheaper than any new source of energy, and should be encouraged.) As long as low estimates like those in the OTA report are prevalent, these experts won't have to take a closer look.

The contrast between energy-study teams at the Harvard Business School and at Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies indicates the range of current thinking in academia. In 1979, a Harvard study called *Energy Future* estimated that current gas-consumption levels could be maintained for only twenty-five to thirty years before sharply higher prices would have to take effect. In 1982, one of the authors of the study, Daniel Yergin, called the United States "an aging producer" of gas that was "outrunning its geological base." Like the Harvard study, a CSIS report briefly mentioned optimism among some gas producers but generally ignored gas as a potential solution to our dependence on foreign oil.

Today, Yergin remains cautious about gas supplies, though he agrees that "there is a high degree of uncertainty, and people can make good cases on either side." Attitudes changed at Georgetown when Henry Schuler, once an oil-company executive, joined the staff. "My thinking is that natural gas is—bar none—the most attractive alternative to foreign oil," Schuler says. "The resource base is enormous in this country, and it's available in the lower forty-eight states. Obviously natural gas is environmentally the most attractive fuel of any, because it burns so cleanly. The transportation system is in place for natural gas, so you don't have the problems of coal, with the railroads in the East being really unable to carry a lot more coal. The technology is in place. And there's no doubt in my mind that in a deregulated market natural gas can compete on a price basis with imported oil. We should be optimizing both the production and the consumption of gas."

One concern both Yergin and Schuler discuss is the price at which gas can be produced. With the average wellhead price having tripled since 1978, the obstacle to the optimal use of natural gas is no longer short supplies but high prices. In some parts of the country, gas already costs more than residual fuel oil. (The cheapest oil available to industry, residual oil is the heavy residue left after crude is refined.) According to the American Gas Association, 52 percent of electric utilities and industrial consumers—the largest market for gas—have the capacity to use either fuel. Thus, in the short term it hardly matters whether we can produce more gas; if it costs more than oil, no one will want it.

The average wellhead price of gas was \$2.63 per thousand cubic feet last October—roughly \$1.45 for old interstate gas, \$3.55 for new. None of these prices include processing and transportation costs, which amount to another \$1.20 to \$1.50. Pipelines depending upon large quantities

of new gas were, of course, paying more than \$2.63. At \$2.85, gas becomes as expensive to use as residual oil in some markets—particularly those where industrial users can burn the least expensive high-sulfur oil without worrying about environmental problems. The break-even point is generally between \$2.85 and \$3.50, though it goes higher in a few markets. As a consequence, the price of gas is already close to parity with that of its most competitive fuel, residual oil.

The deeper a driller has to go for new gas, the more expensive it becomes. Hence, a key question in the natural-gas debate is whether large supplies can continue to be produced at prices below those of foreign oil. Heavy industry and electric utilities, which buy most of our gas, remain uncertain about the answer.

Gas *should* be cheaper than foreign oil, in a rational marketplace. Today, 10 to 20 percent more gas is available than the market can absorb; thus, prices at or below those of oil obviously have been adequate to stimulate exploration and production. And current gas prices are *higher* than they need to be. The 1979 decontrol of gas found below 15,000 feet created a sudden price incentive to drill that deep, more than three times the depth of the average well sunk before 1979. As a result, a great deal of the gas between 5,000 and 15,000 feet—which would be cheaper to produce than deep gas—was leapfrogged. By 1983, expensive deep gas (and gas from other unconventional sources also decontrolled in 1979) represented 8 or 9 percent of all gas in interstate pipelines but accounted for 23 percent of the total cost for interstate gas. When all new gas is decontrolled next year, drilling will return to the shallower, cheaper reservoirs, lowering the average costs of drilling.

Most gas is much cheaper to produce than oil, and always will be. Oil must be pumped out of the ground and refined, while gas rises on its own and must simply be stripped of moisture and contaminants, such as sulfur. In 1975, the last time the Federal Power Commission tried to estimate the total exploration, production, and development costs for gas, it came up with a figure of 67 to 80 cents per thousand cubic feet, which allowed for a 15 percent rate of return on investment. (This estimate primarily reflected the cost of shallow gas, since the production of deep gas was rare in 1975.) Today inflation has probably raised the figure to \$1.50.

In 1983, the federal Energy Information Administration made a similar study. In a working draft, the EIA concluded that the vast majority of new gas in the nation could be produced for under \$3.00 per mcf, allowing for a 15 percent profit. Even gas from most fields at 17,500 feet, the deepest the EIA analyzed, fell under the \$3.00 mark. The study did not include exploration costs, but this omission was offset by the fact that its base year was 1981. Since then, as the gold-rush fever in the gas fields has subsided, drilling costs have fallen 30 percent, interest rates have dropped even further, and federal taxes have been cut sharply.

The cost of deep gas is a subject of controversy in the industry today. Looking at the 1979–1982 period, when most deep drilling was done, many in the industry conclude that deep gas can only rarely be produced for under \$5 per mcf. Others point out, however, that the 1979–1982 era was marked by extreme inflation in the industry, as demand for drilling rigs and supplies intensified. They also note that most of those drilling deep were new to the game, lacking experience with the tricky geology one finds below 15,000 feet. As a result, mechanical errors were common and many promising wells were ruined.

Bob Hefner, whose GHK Companies drilled the first deep well, in 1969, probably knows more than any other man alive about both deep drilling and the Anadarko Basin. Hefner is known in the industry as a gambler and an optimist, and some people discount much of what he says. But some of his maverick notions, particularly about the existence and scale of deep-gas reservoirs, have proved correct in the past. And his company has as much experience drilling for deep gas as any other. Today, Hefner believes that most deep wells will be quite profitable at \$3.00 to \$4.00 per mcf. Others in the industry agree, including Brian Whitworth, a vice-president at Phillips Petroleum, which has done substantial deep drilling in the Anadarko.

Hefner does not deny that costs rise geometrically as one drills deeper—from \$200,000 for the average 4,000-foot well to between \$5 and \$10 million for a well of more than 20,000 feet. At great depths, one encounters sudden changes in pressure and rock density, which require quick adjustments in drilling speed, drill weight, and the type of drilling muds used to lubricate the bit. However, Hefner says, thanks to economies bred of experience his company today is drilling significantly faster than it was just a few years ago, and twice as cheaply. His people have learned so much about the geology of the deep Anadarko that they can now anticipate where they will hit sudden changes in pressure and density. They also know more about where to drill for the biggest payoffs.

Perhaps the greatest advances have been in drilling technology, however. Bits and bearings made of new, tougher alloys have been introduced. Rather than turning three or four miles of drill string from the top, motors are now used at the bottom of the hole as well. And drilling muds that stand up to the fierce heat and pressure found at 15,000 or 20,000 feet have been developed. The water-based muds used in the past often cemented up under intense heat and pressure, blocking completion of the well. Today, oil-based muds are used. Other technologies—such as “continuous logging” to let the driller know immediately what pressure and temperature and geological formation the bit is encountering—are still being perfected.

The other factor often ignored by those lacking experience in deep drilling is the very nature of deep gas. Unlike oil or shallow gas, gas below 15,000 feet seems to be pervasive in sedimentary basins. Trapped by the impermeable

layer, it saturates huge areas—greatly reducing the driller's chances of hitting a dry hole. In addition, deep gas is compressed, so volumes of production, like drilling costs, increase radically with depth. During the recent deep-gas bonanza, wells that will produce for years were pouring forth enough gas to repay drilling expenses in a matter of months.

The upshot of all this is that the current wellhead price for new gas should be more than enough to pay the costs of exploration and production for quite a few years. As fields above 15,000 feet are played out in coming decades, more deep gas will have to be found, and prices will gradually rise. The higher demand created as we replace foreign oil will also increase prices. But since pipeline costs do not increase as more gas moves through the line, transmission costs per unit of gas will *fall*. And, given the extent of conservation efforts since the first oil shock, demand should not escalate very rapidly. The average home now uses 20 percent less energy than it did ten years ago, and industry has probably done even better. Conservation efforts are still in high gear, which means that total energy consumption—which has fallen ten percent since 1973—should rise very slowly in the future, if at all.

One must also remember that oil prices are bound to rise. Domestic oil is much scarcer than gas, and as we go offshore and to Alaska for a greater and greater proportion of it, costs will escalate. Foreign-oil prices, of course, are still influenced—if not controlled—by a cartel.

For all these reasons, gas should be cheaper than oil for as long as we use either fuel. Today, it should be much cheaper than OPEC oil, everywhere in the country. In a conventional marketplace, the current glut would have drastically lowered prices, stimulating demand and replacing a great deal of foreign oil. Instead, average wellhead prices rose until February, 1983, and then dropped by only a few cents. As a consequence, gas has lost ground to foreign oil in the battle for market share.

INDUSTRY SPOKESMEN CAVALIERLY BLAME THIS PROBLEM on continued price controls—as if ceilings somehow prevent prices from falling. The real story is very different, however. Gas prices rose despite sinking demand because buyers were panicked by tales of long-term shortages. They have remained high because the absence of genuine price competition has allowed major producers virtually to ignore the laws of supply and demand.

During the late seventies, fear of another shortage was so widespread that it triggered a wild scramble by gas-pipeline companies for guaranteed supplies. With old gas still under price controls, the major oil companies, which own most of the old gas, had little reason to increase their production from old fields. Some oilmen have even admitted that significant amounts of old gas were held out of production so that greater quantities of the more profitable new gas could be sold.

Faced with limited supplies of old gas, pipelines and utilities were forced to consider more-expensive options: new gas, deep gas, and foreign gas. In the mad rush to line up supplies, pipelines bid up prices for deep gas to \$9 and \$10 per mcf—four times the price of new shallow gas. Most agreed to “take-or-pay” contracts, which obligated buyers to pay for most or all of a producer’s gas—whether they needed it or not—for five, ten, or even twenty years.

New shallow gas, permitted to rise gradually in price until full decontrol in 1985, was also in great demand. Most contracts called for the gradual price escalations allowed by law and sharp increases upon decontrol. Thus, a producer might be guaranteed \$5 per mcf in 1985, even if the market price is only \$3.

The price charged by Canadian suppliers, who were not subject to American controls, hit \$4.94. Some pipeline companies even signed long-term contracts for more-expensive liquefied natural gas from overseas. Driven by the expectation of shortage and allowed by regulations to pass rising costs on to their customers, pipelines had every incentive to nail down long-term supplies and no incentive to hold the line on price. This madness built huge price increases into the system, which hit consumers hard as the new gas came into use in the eighties.

As prices rose, demand fell. Industry had initially been scared off gas by the shortages of the mid-seventies, during which many companies had been forced to switch to fuel oil. In 1979, the Carter Administration’s Fuel Use Act institutionalized the switch. It held gas consumption by utilities at the low levels established during the shortages, prohibited extensions of many gas contracts, banned construction of new gas and oil boilers, and ordered most utilities to shift from gas to coal by 1990. The act also restricted industrial use of gas. Until the Iranian-inspired oil shortage of 1979, Congress and the President were actually moving to force electric utilities to switch to foreign oil.

The day the Fuel Use Act was passed, many people in Carter’s Department of Energy understood its flaws. “By the time it was signed, we knew there was plenty of gas around,” says David J. Bardin, who had to administer the act. When the 1979 oil shortage hit, Bardin began granting any and all exemptions allowable under the bill, urging industry to shift back from oil to gas. And in 1981, the Reagan Administration persuaded Congress to knock out the act’s most restrictive provisions. By then, however, gas prices had escalated so wildly that oil was actually cheaper in many parts of the country.

When the recession hit, in 1982, a full-scale glut of gas was on hand. Drillers who had borrowed millions to sink deep wells, expecting a return of \$9.00 per mcf, saw prices plunge to the \$3.00 range. Chaos hit the industry, as boom turned to bust. Wells were capped, bankruptcies were filed, and several banks with bulging gas portfolios collapsed.

Meanwhile, pipelines found themselves stuck with more gas than they needed, on take-or-pay contracts. A survey

by the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America projected that pipelines would pay \$3.3 billion in 1983 for gas not taken. Consumer outrage grew as pipelines cut off their cheap suppliers and continued pumping the expensive gas with which they had so recently saddled themselves. In just one example, Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation, which supplies much of the mid-Atlantic region, stopped buying \$1 gas from shallow wells in Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania while continuing to pay \$9 for gas from deep wells in Louisiana and Texas.

Unable to sell all this expensive gas in a recessionary market, some pipelines and utilities threatened to follow the drillers into bankruptcy. Many American manufacturers dependent upon gas teetered on the same brink. Misguided notions of shortage had finally collided with the reality of abundance, shaking the industry to its roots.

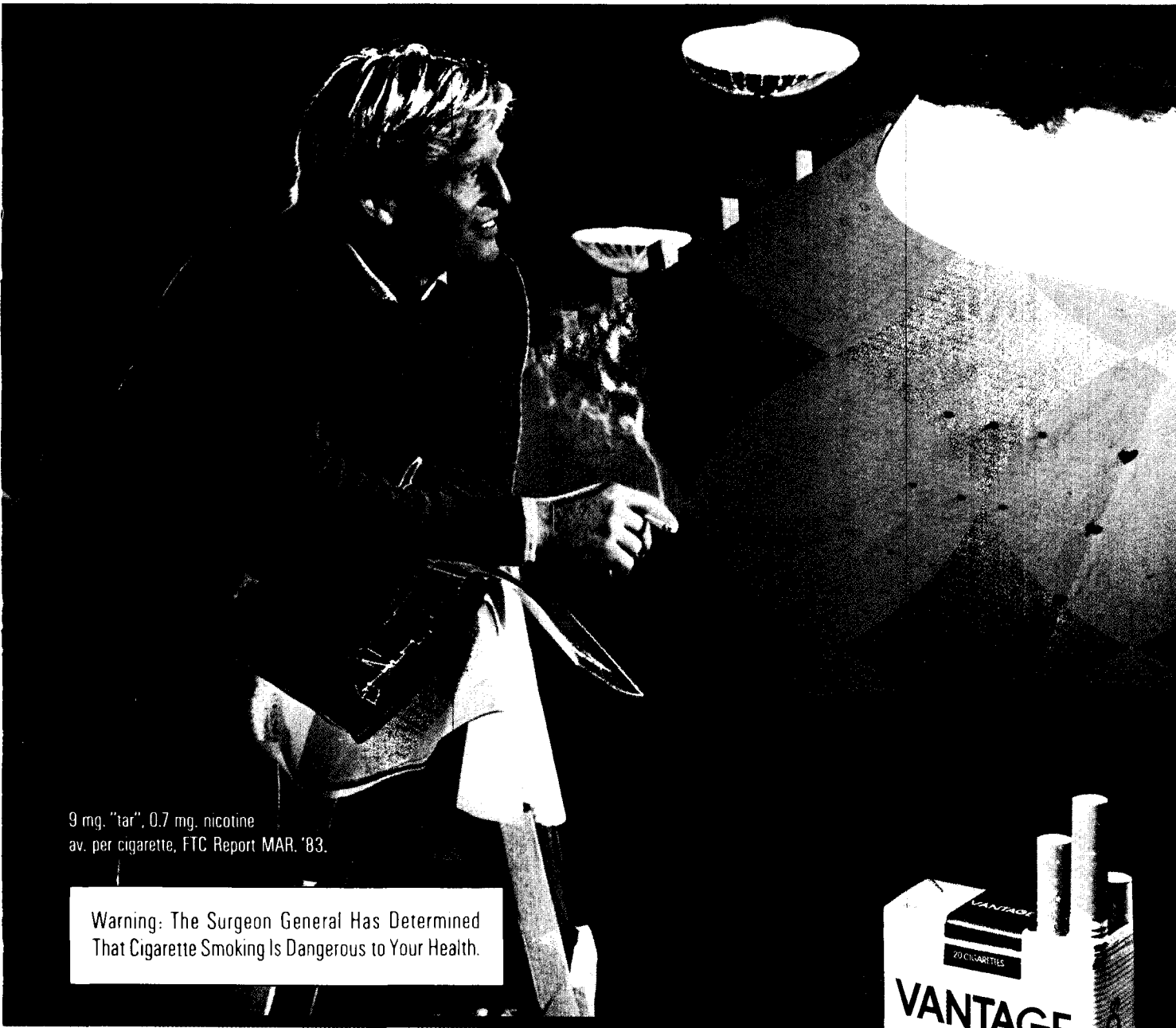
THE ONLY WAY TO BRING THE GAS INDUSTRY TO ITS senses, according to the oil companies that dominate it, is to return it to the free market. To do so, the Reagan Administration has proposed to decontrol all gas, old and new, repeal the remaining provisions of the Fuel Use Act, and allow all long-term contracts to be broken in 1985. Suddenly the nation’s entire supply of gas would be up for sale at whatever price buyers and sellers could negotiate. Let prices find their own levels, the Administration reasons, and everything else will fall into place.

This argument would make sense in a market where many sellers competed, each trying to attract buyers by offering the lowest price. But genuine competition does not exist in the natural-gas industry.

Oil and gas executives have argued for decades that the competitive nature of their industry is obvious, since thousands of individual companies produce gas. The rule of thumb, they point out, is that eight or fewer firms must control at least 50 percent of production in an industry before anticompetitive pricing is possible. In natural-gas production, sixteen companies are needed to hit the 50 percent mark.

Unlike autos or appliances, however, gas is normally sold through long-term contracts, guaranteeing supplies for ten or twenty years. Thus, to measure price competition at any point in time, one must count the firms that control all gas currently available for sale, not all gas currently under contract. In 1973, the last time the federal government investigated ownership of these “uncommitted reserves” in most producing regions, the top eight firms—almost all of them major oil companies—controlled well over 75 percent. Of the top four producers in each of the six regions studied, all but two were major oil companies. The exceptions were a gas-pipeline firm and a large independent gas producer.

The Federal Power Commission staff found a similar pattern when it investigated offshore and onshore reserves. Small companies could not afford to bid for offshore leases.



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MCDONNELL DOUGLAS



Onshore, the independents normally drilled on land owned by one of the majors, usually selling their discoveries to the company that owned the land.

The major oil companies not only owned most uncommitted reserves but also bid jointly for many leases, both onshore and offshore. David Schwartz, who was the assistant chief in the FPC Office of Economics when the study was done, describes the process: "Exxon, Mobil, and Texaco acquire acreage and set up an operator on a lease, who markets for all the owners. So each stream of gas is sold not competitively but together. It's as if U.S. Steel and Bethlehem Steel set up a joint plant—we'd never accept it in any other industrial sector. I contend that it is anticompetitive. By marketing through these joint ventures you obviously peel off the possibility of the majors competing against one another."

Some economists point to a countervailing force: the fact that only one pipeline exists to buy gas in many areas. This gives the pipeline "monopsony power," or the ability to demand low prices because, inasmuch as many areas are covered by only one pipeline, producers have nowhere else to take their gas. Unfortunately, the situation is not that simple. Because it is difficult to store large amounts of gas for periods of shortage (or to buy new gas on a spot market, since expensive pipelines must be built to hook up new fields), pipelines must assure themselves of long-term, uninterrupted supplies. For this reason, interstate contracts have historically been for twenty years or more, though the shortages of the 1970s brought the average down, and it is perhaps ten years today. In many areas, the only companies that can provide enough gas are the majors—which, as we have seen, often sell as one. Having invested heavily to lay their gathering lines, the pipelines cannot afford to turn away from the majors' gas. Thus their monopsony power is offset by the major producers' monopoly power.

Federal regulations that allow pipelines automatically to pass the cost of their gas on to the utilities—which are in turn allowed by state utility commissions automatically to pass it on to their customers—further destroy the incentive to bargain for lower prices. Given this situation, pipelines have usually bargained for supplies, not for price. Long ago, they accepted federal ceilings as the prices they paid the majors, though they have been perfectly free to demand lower rates.

To compound the problem, all thirty-one of the major interstate gas pipelines also produce gas, through subsidiaries or affiliated companies. Some buy as much as 35 percent of their supplies from themselves; the average is 12 percent. According to David Schwartz, "None of the thirty-one has acquired any acreage independently. They produce in combination with the majors." Schwartz believes that this creates a community of interest between pipelines and producers, who are supposedly bargaining "at arm's length."

In addition, federal regulations allow pipelines to pay

their own producing affiliates the same price they pay others. As everyone in the industry acknowledges, this hardly encourages pipelines to seek lower prices, since lower prices would cut their profits. Just last year a judge at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (the new name for the FPC) found Columbia Gas Transmission guilty of cutting back purchases of low-cost gas from other producers in order to continue buying its own high-cost gas, in quantities larger than those specified by its contracts.

Many oil companies also own gas pipelines, particularly intrastate pipelines. Pipelines and producers are further linked through interlocking boards of directors. During the early seventies, as the shortage of interstate gas developed, the FPC commissioners allowed any interstate pipeline whose deliveries had been curtailed to pay higher prices temporarily, to secure additional supplies. When the FPC staff investigated these emergency sales, they found some eighty cases in which the same person sat on the board of both the buyer and the seller.

Historically, all of these forces have combined to let large producers virtually dictate their terms. The typical results have included "most-favored-nation" clauses, which automatically raise producers' prices to the highest figure secured by any other producer in the area; "indefinite price escalators," which automatically increase prices whenever federal ceilings rise; and take-or-pay contracts.

Some observers argue that though this analysis was valid in 1973, aggressive expansion by independent drillers has changed the picture. Because the independents owned more than 70 percent of all new-gas reserves by 1982, these observers point out, the share of production controlled by the twenty largest producers fell from 61 percent in 1975 to 47 percent in 1981. But without knowing how much of the independents' gas is marketed through the majors, it is impossible to know whether this shift in control over production also created a shift in control over sales, thus stimulating price competition. In addition, the collapse of the deep-gas market since 1982 has forced many independents to sell acreage to the majors to avoid bankruptcy and has driven others out of business entirely.

Regardless of any progress made by the independents, however, other factors continue to inhibit competitive pricing. The pipelines still buy gas from their own affiliates, for instance, a practice that tends to push prices upward. And most of the major producing states, including Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Kansas, and New Mexico, ration production from gas wells in the name of conservation, much the way OPEC restricts oil production to limit supplies and prop up prices. (Industry critics find it ironic that the major producers fiercely condemn government regulation when it holds prices down but remain silent when it props them up.)

If today's market were truly competitive, two years of oversupply would surely have driven average prices down. For the independents, it has. Lacking the financial muscle to survive long court battles, they have watched helplessly

as pipelines have unilaterally cut the prices guaranteed by their contracts. But the major oil companies are fighting such moves in court, keeping the price of new gas from plummeting, as it logically should.

A similar dynamic prevails in the market for new supplies. As of October, the NGPA ceiling for new gas was \$3.52. Some of the independents, with creditors nipping at their heels, were selling for \$2.50 to \$3.00, to the handful of pipelines that needed gas. But, according to Ted Eck, chief economist at Amoco, none of the majors was willing to sell significant volumes at this price level. A few long-term contracts at about \$3.25, with automatic escalators up to \$4.00 by 1985, were being signed—but even at \$3.25 few majors were involved. “There are published surveys showing the pipelines simply have to buy more gas before the end of 1985, to fulfill their contracts,” Eck explains. “So the market knows the pipelines have got to be much more

aggressive buyers in the future. Sellers aren’t willing to sell for \$2.50 now if they think they can get \$4.00 [then].” Since the majors have financial cushions to fall back on, only the independents have been forced to accept the dictates of a glutted market.

In a competitive market, gas prices would surely fall for *all* producers. Gas would replace most or all foreign oil in industrial and utility boilers with dual capacity, and it would compete mainly with domestic oil in the residential and commercial markets. Since most gas is cheaper to produce than oil, more and more of it would be produced, replacing oil, until the cheapest gas had been exhausted. At that point, as more-expensive gas was produced, gas and oil would reach price equilibrium, with consumers paying approximately the same amount per delivered unit of energy for each fuel. The amount of each resource that was consumed would be governed by the amount producible at



WHIPLASH

That month he was broke,
so when the brakes to his car
went sloshy, he let them go.
Next month his mother came
to visit, and out they went
to gawk, to shop, to have something
to do while they talked besides
sitting down like a seminar
to talk. One day soon he’d fix
the brakes, or—as he joked
after nearly bashing a cab
and skidding widdershins
through the intersection
of Viewcrest and Edgecliff—
they’d fix him, one of these
oncoming days. We like
to explain our lives to ourselves,
so many of our fictions
are about causality—chess
problems (where the ?! after
White’s 16th move marks
the beginning of disaster),
insurance policies, box scores,
psychotherapy (“Were your
needs being met in this
relationship?”), readers’ guides

to pity and terror—, and about
the possibility that because
aging is relentless, logic too
runs straight and one way only.

By this hope to know how
our disasters almost shatter us,
it would make sense to say
the accident he drove into
the day after his mother left
began the month he was broke.
Though why was he broke?
Because of decisions he’d made
the month before to balance
decisions the month before that,
and so on all the way back
to birth and beyond, for his
mother and father brought
to his life the luck of theirs.

And so when his car one slick day
oversped its dwindling ability
to stop itself and smacked two
parked cars and lightly kissed
another, like a satisfying
billiards shot, and all this action

(so slow in compression and
preparation) exploded so quickly,
it seemed not that his whole life
swam or skidded before him,
but that his whole life was behind
him, like a physical force,
the way a dinosaur’s body
was behind its brain and the news
surged up and down its vast
and clumsy spine like an early
version of the blues; indeed,
indeed, what might he do
but sing, as if to remind himself
by the power of anthem that the body’s
disparate and selfish provinces
are connected. And that’s how
the police found him, full-throated,
dried blood on his white suit
as if he’d been caught in a rust-
storm, song running back and forth
along his hurt body like the action
of a wave, which is not water,
strictly speaking, but a force
that water welcomes and displays.

—William Matthews

that price. In the process, the price of gas would be the determining factor, dragging the price of oil down to its level.

In a noncompetitive market, however, just the opposite would happen. Gas prices would rise to the price of foreign oil and stay there. The price of gas would bear no relationship to the cost of production, as it would if producers were genuinely competing by offering their lowest price. Instead, it would be set by the cost of a competing *fuel*—which would in turn be set by a foreign cartel. Producers would be richer, consumers poorer, and the nation as a whole would continue to send \$60 billion or more overseas every year for foreign oil.

Bob Hefner explained why oil companies would prefer to see oil determine the price of gas, rather than the other way around, in testimony before the House Subcommittee on Fossil and Synthetic Fuels last April. The key, he argued, is their desire to keep oil consumption high—which means keeping gas consumption low.

In a market-shares battle between oil and methane, integrated energy companies will always make more money selling oil than natural gas. Multinational oil producers make money not only when they discover and sell crude oil but also when they ship it, when they refine it, and when they market it at the wholesale and retail level. In contrast, these companies typically have no economic interest in the pipelines that transport nor in the distribution companies that market their natural-gas supplies. The revenues to be earned from selling gas cannot begin to compare with the revenues to be earned from selling oil.

Let me give you two concrete examples. Exxon's revenues in 1981 for sale of crude oil were over \$14 billion. Revenues for refining and marketing of petroleum products totaled nearly \$86 billion. Natural-gas revenues were only \$2.5 billion. Exxon owns almost as many BTUs of natural gas as of crude oil. Yet it would take a forty-fold increase in the price of natural gas for Exxon's revenues from the sale of natural gas to equal revenues from production, refining, and marketing of oil. . . . Shell's revenues are twelve times as much from the production, refining, and marketing of oil as from the sale of natural gas. Shell, like Exxon, is primarily an oil, not a natural-gas, producer, and their corporate strategy—just as mine would be if I were they—will inevitably be to maximize oil markets and oil production, not natural gas.

Congressional investigations of the behavior of major oil companies during the oil shortage of 1973–1974, detailed by John M. Blair in *The Control of Oil*, revealed how far the majors will go to control prices and limit competition. When they lost control over foreign production to OPEC, refining and sales became the majors' high-profit sectors. To this end, they had to squeeze independent refiners and gas stations out of business, so as to limit price competition. They were remarkably successful. It is hard to imagine why they would not employ similar tactics in the gas business.

THE FUTURE OF NATURAL-GAS PRICING IS NOW IN the hands of Congress. As matters stand, most new gas—some 50 to 60 percent of our total gas supply—will be decontrolled on January 1, 1985. A majority in Congress appears to support repeal of the Fuel Use Act; some action to curb the impact of automatic price escalators, which threaten to force gas prices even higher in 1985; some moderation of take-or-pay contracts; and stricter regulation of pipelines' purchasing habits. The Reagan proposal to decontrol old gas, however, has revived one of the great ideological struggles of the past forty years. During the last battle, in 1978, decontrol of new gas passed the House by one vote, after seventy-five weeks of bitter debate.

In the past, the oil and gas industries have always united behind decontrol. This time they are split down the middle. Old-gas decontrol would create a windfall estimated at \$40 to \$100 billion for the majors, who control more than 70 percent of all old gas. But as old gas rose in price, new gas would fall. Thus, most of the independents, who produce more than 70 percent of all new gas, oppose the bill. Most utilities and pipelines, fearing higher prices, also oppose decontrol.

Leading the fight against decontrol of old gas is the Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition, which claims to represent some 300 organizations. CLEC has drafted its own measure, cosponsored by 154 representatives and seventeen senators. It would extend controls on new gas until 1987 and mandate rates lower than those under the current schedule. The bill would also allow take-or-pay purchases to be reduced to 50 percent of gas produced for three years; control deep gas at 150 percent of new-gas prices; and force tougher regulation of pipelines. Last October, the chairmen of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and its subcommittee on fossil and synthetic fuels, John Dingell, of Michigan, and Philip Sharp, of Indiana, joined forces to sponsor a compromise version of the CLEC bill that preserves most of its important features.

In Congress, the battle is not Republicans versus Democrats but producing versus consuming states. Since President Reagan will veto any reconrol of new-gas prices, as in the CLEC bill, that issue is moot. The real issue is decontrol of old gas: should Congress allow market prices, somewhere between \$3.00 and \$3.50, for gas that was profitable ten years ago at 46 cents?

The argument for decontrol of old gas turns on the assumption that higher prices will bring forth new supplies—gas that was either deliberately held off the market in anticipation of decontrol, or gas that would not be profitable at regulatory-ceiling prices, which now average \$1.45. But since decontrol would bring the price of old gas up and that of new gas down—and thus discourage new drilling—this does not seem to be a wise bargain. Drilling is already at a virtual standstill, thanks to the gas glut. As a result, much of the industry expects another temporary shortage in 1985 or 1986. Incentives to produce more old gas would

help, but incentives to produce new gas would help more, particularly in the long run.

Fortunately, there is a simple way to achieve both incentives. Old-gas producers might be allowed to charge higher prices if they could prove a well would not continue producing at profitable levels without expensive enhancement measures (such as pumping water down the well to raise its pressure). Federal regulations already permit this, if the buyer agrees. The mechanism might need some fine tuning, but such adjustments would be infinitely preferable to deregulating all old gas.

The key issue in the debate over decontrol of old gas, however, will be price: will the decontrol of old gas drive average prices up or down? The Energy Information Administration, created by Congress to provide independent analysis of the energy industry, says up. The oil companies and the DOE say down. They use the analogy of the trucking and airline industries, where deregulation unleashed fierce competition and brought consumers genuine bargains. Unfortunately, however, given the structure of the gas industry, a more appropriate analogy is oil-price decontrol. When President Carter initiated oil deregulation in 1979, prices more than doubled, to OPEC levels, costing the average American household \$700 over two years. Most economists expect gas to follow a similar pattern, with prices rising to the level of residual oil. Utility and pipeline executives, who have every reason to understand gas pricing, agree—and give this as their reason for opposing decontrol. As they are quick to explain, any increase in gas prices will cut demand and guarantee that we continue to import great quantities of oil. In addition, rising prices for old gas will hand a windfall to the major oil companies and seriously injure the independents, further undermining competition as power shifts back toward its traditional locus.

THE DEBATE IN CONGRESS WILL LIKELY TURN NOT on the broad, long-range interests of the nation but on the narrow, immediate interests of congressional constituencies—both voters and campaign contributors. During the 1982 campaigns, oil and gas political-action committees gave more than \$7 million to congressional candidates, and they will no doubt be similarly openhanded this time around. On the other side, the Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition has unleashed what may be the largest genuine grassroots effort since the anti-ERA campaign; its activists claim that they knock on 50,000 doors a day. The CLEC campaign has had such an obvious effect on congressmen from consuming states that the Natural Gas Supply Association, which represents the major oil companies, has spent \$3 million on its own door-to-door effort in support of decontrol.

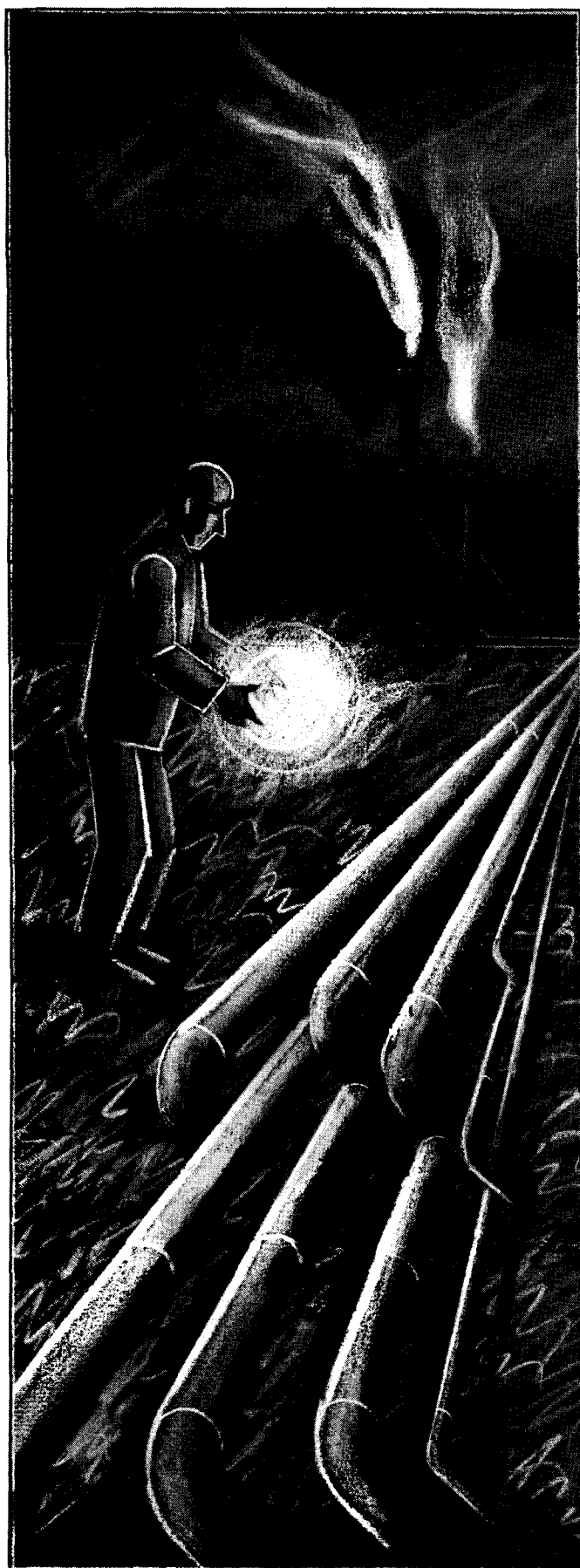
This squeeze between voters and campaign contributors has engendered some perverse behavior, as was visible in the Senate Energy Committee last summer, while it re-

wrote the basic Reagan proposal. Just to get the bill out of committee with no recommendation, Republican Chairman James McClure, of Idaho, had to exempt several states from its key provisions. Frank Murkowski, a Republican from Alaska, supports decontrol in every state but his own, where most gas is cheap, purchased under contracts signed long ago, and where prices would soar if gas were decontrolled; before Murkowski would vote to release the bill, the committee had to exempt Alaska. Bennett Johnston, a Democrat from Louisiana, likewise approved the bill, but only after the committee had eliminated a provision decontrolling direct sales by producers to buyers (bypassing the pipelines); most such sales occur, to no one's surprise, in Louisiana. Malcolm Wallop, a Republican from Wyoming, also gave Chairman McClure his vote, but only after small producers who want to sell their gas collectively were granted immunity from the antitrust laws; Wyoming is, of course, home to many independents. Even Spark Matsunaga, a Democrat from Hawaii, which neither produces nor consumes much gas, demanded a price for his vote: DOE funding for two pet energy projects in his state.

If a majority in Congress were to step back and analyze the issues objectively, oblivious of political pressures, the picture would be quite clear. Given the large supply of gas now known to exist, national policy should strive to meet four simple objectives. The government should ensure that high volumes of gas are produced. It should eliminate all restrictions on the use of that gas, such as the Fuel Use Act. It should convince consumers large and small that gas is plentiful and will continue to be so. And it should prevent anticompetitive features of the energy industry from holding prices at artificially high levels.

How can these objectives be achieved? A first step would be to repeal the remaining clauses of the Fuel Use Act. Similarly, to bring prices down, partial relief should be granted buyers saddled with take-or-pay contracts and automatic price escalators. Pipelines should be held to stricter standards in their purchasing habits, and old gas should remain under price controls.

Even if these steps are taken, however, they will lead us only partway toward a solution. The key to stimulating use of our abundant gas supplies is keeping gas prices somewhere near the costs of exploration and production—and thus below the price of OPEC oil. In an anticompetitive industry, measures to this effect can take any of three directions. The first is to set prices at the cost of production plus a fair rate of return, as the FPC did from 1954 to 1978. The veto-bound CLEC bill would be a step in this direction, but only for three more years. In addition to its obvious political impracticality, however, this approach presents economic problems. When the government controls prices, it leaves production decisions in the hands of private corporations. As history has shown, this encourages producers to hold even profitable gas off the market, while they work to end price controls or invest their money in



a resource whose prices are not controlled, such as oil. If the goal is a rapid increase of the supply of gas, price controls may be counterproductive.

The second strategy follows a precedent set even earlier: the use of federal antitrust powers to force genuine price competition among producers. Clearly this could bring about some progress: pipelines could be severed from their producing affiliates; joint ventures between large producers could be outlawed; oil companies and pipelines could be prosecuted for holding cheap old gas off the market while producing more-expensive new gas. But history has shown that successful antitrust prosecution of corporations as powerful as the oil majors is next to impossible. What the Justice Department wins, Congress takes away—or vice versa.

The third strategy is one that has been pursued successfully by other developed nations, including Great Britain and Norway: the establishment of a government energy corporation to compete in all sectors of the industry. The public corporation becomes a yardstick against which to measure the behavior of private firms. When the government believes prices are being inflated without reason, it simply sells its own supplies for less, undercutting the competition. In this way the British government forced major oil companies to drop their prices for North Sea gas by almost 50 percent. Such a solution may appear even less likely than the first two in today's political climate. But if we accept the limitations of today's political climate, no solution is possible.

If the price issue were settled, the government could then move on to the question of consumption. Even after those industries and utilities with dual fuel capacity had switched from oil to gas, we would still be importing perhaps 3 to 4 million barrels of oil a day. To spur additional conversions, the government must lead.

Perhaps the most impressive inroads on the use of foreign oil could be made by converting automobiles to compressed natural gas. Experience in the United States and abroad proves that CNG works, particularly for business and taxi fleets, in which drivers do not normally travel more than 150 miles at a stretch. CNG tanks are too bulky for long-distance driving, although many cars are equipped to burn either CNG or gasoline, at the flip of a switch.

Because oil has to be refined to create gasoline, natural gas should always be the cheaper of the two automotive fuels. In British Columbia today, it costs half what gasoline does per mile driven. Those who are not familiar with compressed natural gas often assume that it is dangerous and can lead to catastrophic explosions. But in reality, it is safer than gasoline. CNG tanks are no more susceptible to damage or explosions than scuba tanks, which are filled to the same pressure. The Ministry of Universities, Science, and Communications of the Province of British Columbia, which is directing an ambitious conversion program, explains why CNG is safe:

CNG has four big safety advantages over gasoline or propane. First, it's lighter than air. If it leaks, it just rises and dissipates (gasoline and propane will puddle and build up a hazard). Second, it takes a temperature of 700°C or better to ignite. Gasoline ignites at a much lower temperature (450°C), and so does propane. Third, it takes specific CNG-to-air percentages—four to fourteen—for combustion. That is a narrower ratio range than gasoline's. Fourth, CNG tanks are built, by law, to hold extreme pressure—and are tested at 34.5 MPa (5,000 pounds per square inch) or higher depending upon the tank. That is more than 1.6 times the pressure to which they are filled. The tanks are heavy, rugged, and well-secured. They are less susceptible to collision damage than ordinary gasoline tanks. The American Gas Association found no natural-gas fires or explosions in 180 rear-end collisions with CNG-equipped vehicles.

According to a publication of the federal government in Canada, not one injury or death has been caused by compressed natural gas in thirty years of use in Italy, where some 250,000 vehicles burn the fuel. New Zealand, as well as Canada, is shifting a significant number of its vehicles from gasoline to methane.

Consumers will not pay \$1,800 to convert a car to CNG, however—nor will they buy new autos specially designed to burn natural gas—until the fuel is widely available. Installation of natural-gas compressors and dispensers (both at gas stations and at home, in one's garage) could be encouraged through tax or other incentives, as they are in Canada. Consumers must also be convinced that plenty of natural gas will be available for many years. The government can play a crucial role here, not only in reassuring the public but also in helping industry develop the technology needed to exploit our huge geopressed gas reserves. Washington spends billions every year on nuclear power and synthetic fuels, both of which now appear to be dead ends, at least for the foreseeable future. Surely geopressed gas is worth a few million R&D dollars a year.

Besides going a long way toward resolving our energy problems, natural gas should be considered as a response to our environmental problems. Other than the sun and the wind and the sea, gas is our cleanest source of energy. In the long run, the wisest solution to our acid-rain problem may be full or partial substitution of natural gas for high-sulfur coal in midwestern boilers. Even partially completed nuclear plants could be converted to gas at great savings, as advocated by Dayton Power and Light for the troubled Zimmer nuclear plant in Ohio. And the more gas we substitute for oil and coal, the less we contribute to the buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere—the greenhouse effect, which is expected to raise temperatures on

Earth within a matter of decades. Methane gives off much less carbon dioxide when burned than coal or oil.

The agenda outlined above is obviously an ambitious one. Even if only a small part of it is fulfilled, however, natural gas could help solve some of our nation's most intractable problems. Consider the following scenario:

As take-or-pay contracts are interrupted, gas prices decline and consumption rises. Spurred on by renewed demand, wildcatters start drilling again, and supplies increase. As more and more of the nation's depths are explored, potential-reserves figures begin to rise. With significantly more gas moving through pipelines, the transmission cost per thousand cubic feet drops, keeping consumer prices steady even if wellhead prices creep upward. Acid rain begins to abate, as formerly under-used pipelines to the Midwest fill up with gas. Demand for foreign oil falls, reducing the dollar drain, improving the nation's trade balance, and keeping OPEC prices soft. In decades to come, as drillers go deeper and deeper for gas and prices rise, the nation shifts to renewable energy sources like solar power. Looking back, natural gas is seen to have served as a bridge to the new technologies—a function once envisioned for conventional-nuclear-power plants.

To many, this scenario may seem too rosy to be credible. But natural gas is already well on its way to becoming the world's primary source of energy. In 1979, two European scientists, Dr. Cesare Marchetti, and Dr. Nebojsa Nakićenovic, of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria, did a lengthy study of world energy consumption; they suggested that gas will soon displace oil as the number-one fuel.

In the Soviet Union, gas production grew by 50 percent from 1975 to 1980. In the Middle East, Saudi Arabia and some of its neighbors ship their oil overseas while building their own economies on gas. The inevitability of gas is perhaps best illustrated by Japan, which has almost none of its own. Because of Japan's severe air-pollution problems, most of that country's plans for expanded generation of electricity in recent years have depended upon liquefied natural gas—all of it imported.

Here in the United States, of course, we have the capacity to resist the inevitable. Ten years ago, President Nixon announced Project Independence, but we continue to import millions of barrels of oil every day. By 1975, many energy experts understood that nuclear energy was a failed experiment, but we continue to build nuclear-power plants. Ten years from now, will we still be building nuclear plants and importing foreign oil, while the solution to our problems languishes in the ground? □

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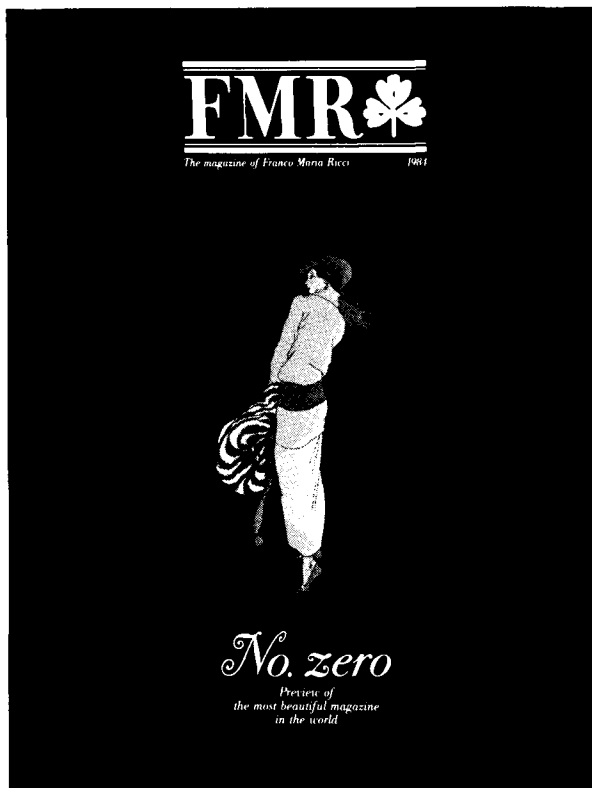
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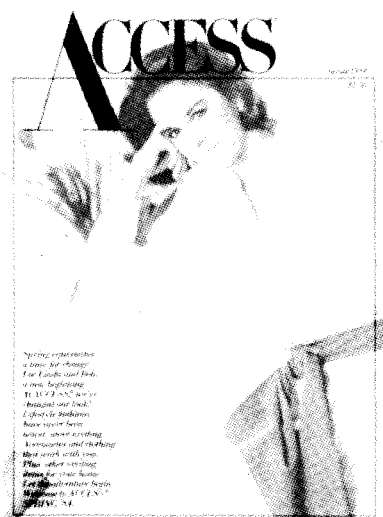


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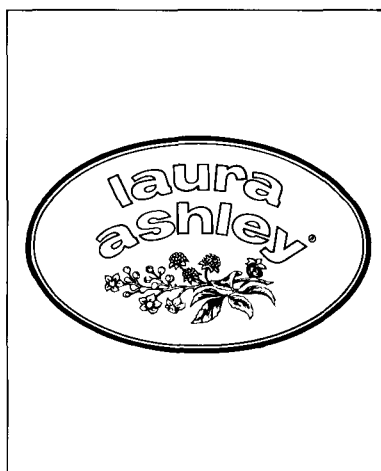
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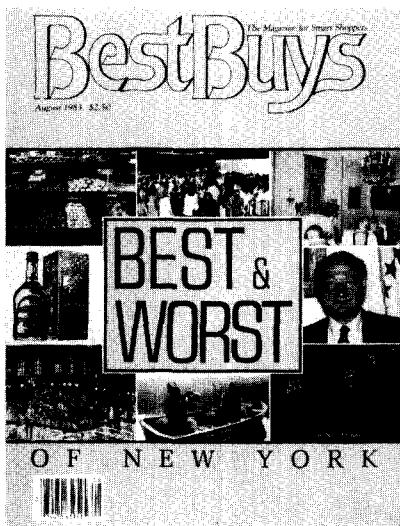
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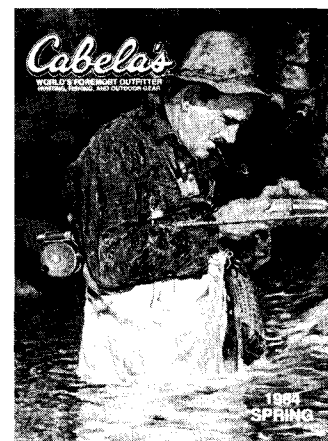
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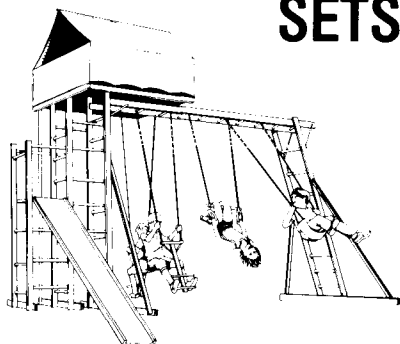
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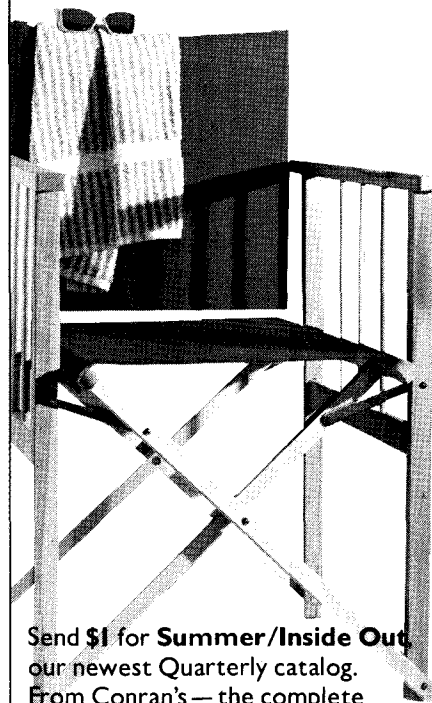
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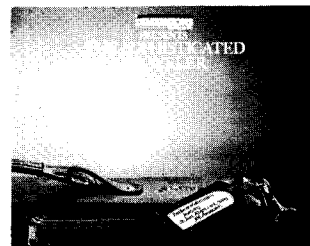
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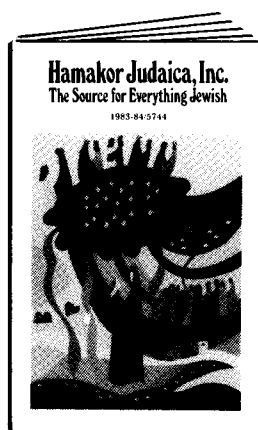
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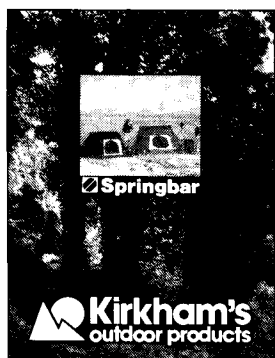
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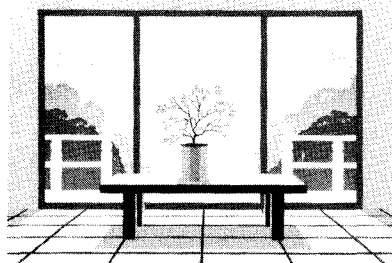
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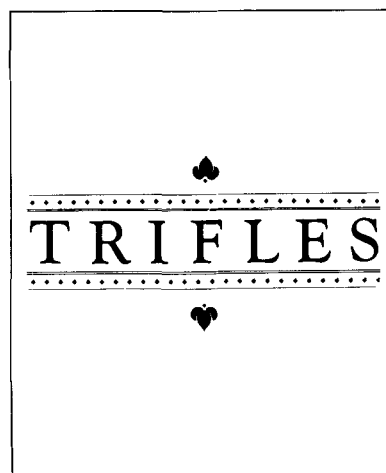


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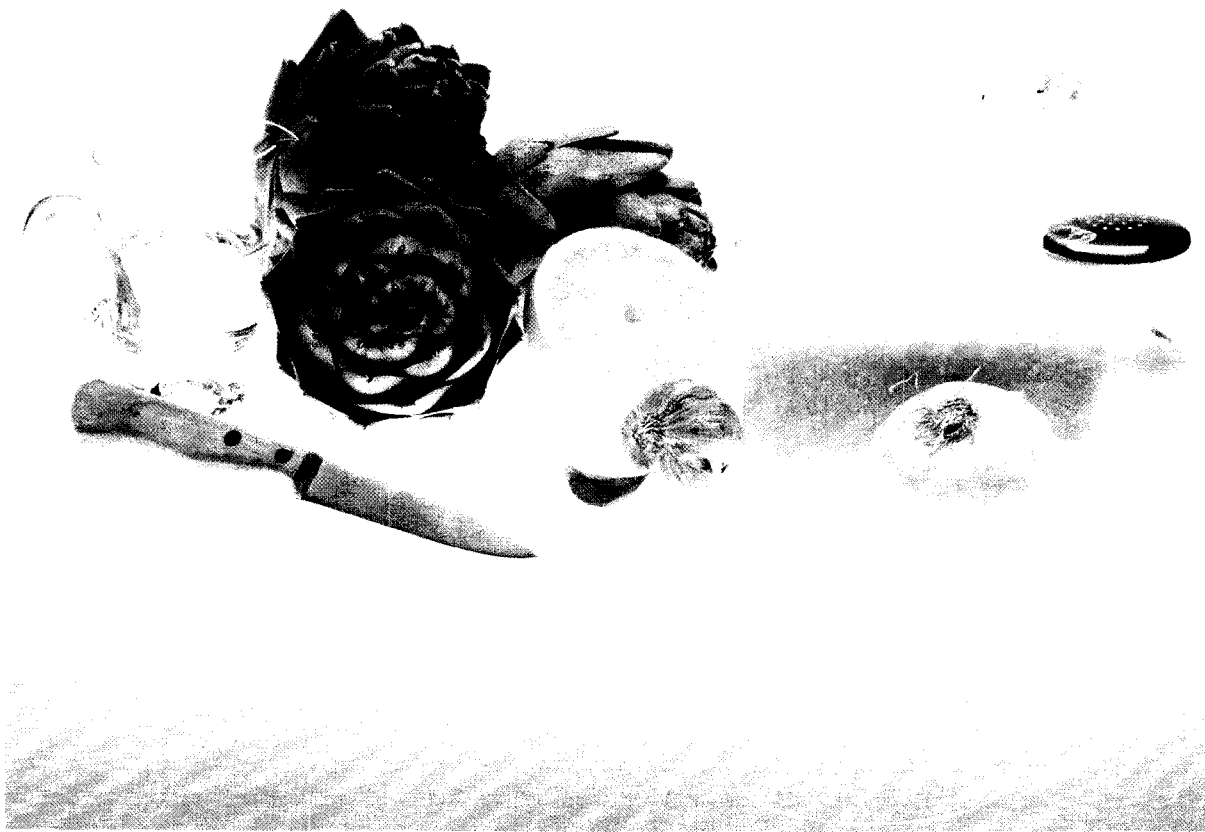
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WHAT MEN DON'T TELL WOMEN

BY ROY BLOUNT, JR.



JOSEPH

I JUST CAME FROM this Men and Masculinity workshop. Rose has completed assertiveness training, and she said if she was going to continue relating to me in a broader sense, I needed to go through tenderness training and claim my wholeness. She said, "Won't it be nice? We'll hang your certificate over the lowboy, right next to mine." She has her assertiveness certificate up there. This workshop gives you one in tenderness.

We met in the Pierce High gym. We sat cross-legged on the floor to break down our stereotype image of how men sit. And we related our feelings while empathizing.

We learned how men have lost their aliveness in relationships because we have been programmed from an early age to always be in control. Alec was our counselor in getting us to open up. Alec said we had always wanted to be tender, but the society told us we couldn't be, but the rapidly growing men's movement was changing that.

We have to acknowledge that we have always been programmed that men have to always be the strong ones. And instead of using women as a dumping ground for our feelings, we have to not be isolated from other men. Alec told us to put our arm around the next man.

I put my arm around this one man, Neil. He said he was working on getting over his aversion to listening to women talk on the phone. He was getting into nonobjective phone conversation, where you talk to hear the other person's voice. Also talking long-distance without any sense of time. He said it relaxed him. He said his problem came from his father always yelling for everybody in the family to get off the phone, for Christ's sake. It took him a long time to realize that relaxing on the phone wasn't sacrilegious. He said he heard there was a way you

could apply for a grant to pay your phone bill.

This other man, Jerry, opened up to the group and said his father was not a feeling, emotional man. This other man, with a name like Uli, said his father wasn't either.

There were these teenage kids coming into the gym bouncing a basketball.

Then Neil said he had something to say that he'd never told anybody. He said he walked past his parents' bedroom one morning on his way to breakfast and instead of being at the breakfast table already his father was lying there in the bed still, crying. His mother was burning bacon. Alec asked Neil how this made him feel. Neil said it was why he lost his erection every time he thought of bacon.

Alec said, see, that was that whole male myth.

I wished I had my arm around Uli or Jerry instead. What I really wished was that Alec would go ahead and give us our certificates. I could feel Neil tensing up to tell something else. But then these teenage kids said they had the gym.

Alec said no, we had the gym for another half hour.

These kids said no, they had the gym now. Some of them were over messing with Alec's papers and laughing. Alec went and got his papers.

One of the kids said to Alec, "Hey, what's your *problem*, man?"

Alec said his problem was all men's problem, grappling with changing roles. He asked the kids if they'd like to sit in on the rest of the session.

The kid with the ball was dribbling real hard right next to me and Neil where we were sitting cross-legged on the floor. And then Neil stood up and started telling about how we were trying to become whole people and the kid bounced the ball off Neil's nose.

And then the kids started pounding on all of us while we were getting uncross-legged and our arms untangled and Neil stole the ball and drove half the court and missed a layup. I thought that was pretty cool, if he had hit it. And the kid

Roy Blount, Jr., is the author of *One Fell Soup* and the forthcoming *What Men Don't Tell Women*.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID JOHNSON

Neil stole the ball from pulled out a knife and we left the gym.

We stood outside on the steps. Neil was bleeding. Alec pointed out to us that the kids were caught up in the whole male myth, and we had gotten something out of the experience. He suggested we take turns helping Neil stop bleeding.

So we did, and Neil said his father always accused him of not playing tough when he was hurt. He said one time he had a sprained ankle in the CYO basketball championship and his father made him tape it up and play. "I was eleven," he said. "My father said, 'Be a Marine.'" And Neil missed four layups and his team lost. Neil said he missed layups to prove something to his father.

Then I said, "Well, can we have our certificates?" They were all jumbled up, and when Alec got them straight and handed them out, somebody had written "FAGIT" in big letters on mine.

How will I tell Rose?

JESSE

I'LL TELL YOU what Miriam and I can't talk about. Burt Reynolds. Burt Reynolds almost destroyed our marriage one night.

Originally it was, Who do you find attractive in the movies? Seems like an interesting question, right? Way for men and women to understand each other. Don't try it.

Miriam couldn't think of anybody. "I don't know any of them well enough," she says.

"No. Wait. Of course you don't!" I say. "That's not the point! But, like, for instance, somebody like Burt Reynolds."

"Oh, no," she says. Wrinkles her nose.

"What?" I say. "You're not attracted to Burt Reynolds?"

"No," she says.

"Yes, you are," I say, "you just don't want to admit it."

"No, I'm not!" she says. "And I don't know any women who are."

"Wait a minute," I say. "Burt Reynolds has run through Judy Carne, Dinah Shore, Tammy Wynette, Sally Field, Loni Anderson, God knows who else, and he's not good enough for you or anybody you know?"

Now she's getting upset.

"Look," I say. "I'm not Burt Reynolds. I don't know Burt Reynolds. I don't imagine I have to worry about your ever meeting Burt Reynolds. We're just, you



know, talking about a guy on a screen. You can level with me."

She won't say anything.

"Okay!" I say. "Okay! Who are you attracted to? There's got to be somebody. I mean one big whole point of the movies. . . Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying you'd be a *pushover* for Burt Reynolds. I'm not saying you're *moon*ing over Burt Reynolds. I'm not saying you admire Burt Reynolds's *life-style*. I'm just saying, in your heart of hearts. . ."

She won't say anything.

"Okay. Never mind Burt Reynolds, who. . . But never mind. There must be *somebody*."

"Well, okay," she says finally. "Ed Asner."

Ed Asner! She gets turned on by Ed Asner! She's twenty-eight years old and she claims she's hot for Ed Asner!

Hey. I *like* Ed Asner. Who *doesn't* like Ed Asner? But when Burt Reynolds and Ed Asner run into each other somewhere, on or off the screen, I don't think it's Reynolds who's thinking, "How does he do it?"

Ed Asner. Now every time I'm looking into Miriam's eyes I'm thinking. . . Damn it! I'm thirty-four years old! I've got hair! I work out! I'm married to a woman who is turned on by Ed Asner?

"Okay," I say to Miriam. "Ed Asner. To me, he looks like a good guy; no doubt about it. I'd love to have a few beers with Ed Asner. Probably rather have a few beers with Ed Asner than with Burt Reynolds. But I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about, you know, somebody who—like, for *me*, I'd say, for ex-

ample, Ann-Margret. You know. Does it for me."

"Whuh!" Miriam says. "Ann-Margret?" She looks at me like I said Peter Lorre.

"Of course Ann-Margret," I say. "That's the whole *point* of Ann-Margret. Why do you think they *make* Ann-Margret movies?"

And it's like I just destroyed the whole basis of our relationship. Miriam is appalled. Because I said Ann-Margret did it for me.

"Listen," I say. "Come on. I'm not saying me and Ann-Margret would be *compatible*. I'm not saying there'd be any *future* in it. I'm not saying we'd have much to *say* to each other. I'm just. . . See, the whole point. . ."

Miriam wound up spending the night with her friend Wendy. Who I can't stand. Who now, whenever the movies comes up, Wendy makes a point of saying how Burt Reynolds thinks he's so cool.

I don't say anything.

I tell you what. People talk about a *ménage à trois*. How does anybody ever agree on the third party?

HARRY

BEFORE SHE GOT a job she was always complaining, "Every time I want you to do something with me, you say you have to work."

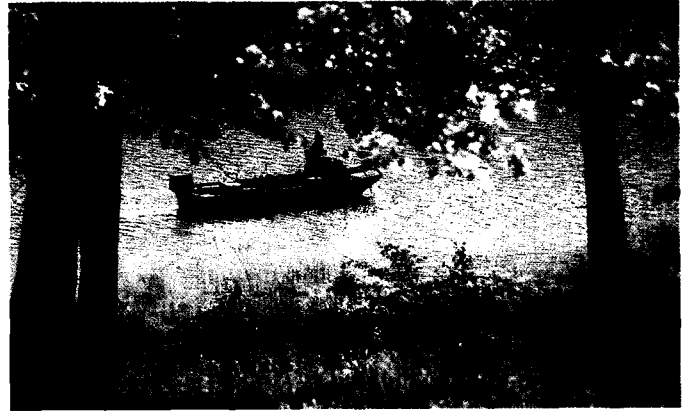
I would say, in a level tone of voice, "That's just clearly not true. I could bring anybody in off the street, and they could listen to what you just said, and they would say, 'That's not really the case.' For one thing, I did something with you yesterday. For another thing, I'm not just *saying* I have to work, I *do* have to work. Be reasonable."

And she would look at me and say, "I wish you could hear yourself. 'Be reasonable!'"

You know, a woman can take something you just said and repeat it back to you in this tone of voice like it's obviously exactly the kind of statement Adolf Hitler always made.

"Be reasonable," she'd say. And she'd look like I just—like anybody could plainly see that I just hit her with an ax. And then she'd say, "I'm telling you how I *feel*." And then she'd look at me like she just said something that any decent human being would realize was the bottom line of the universe.

And I'd say—I tell you what I



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wouldn't say. I wouldn't say, "So?" For some reason, it is universally regarded as fascism to say "So?" to a woman who has just told you how she feels. I accept that. But, say, maybe I would say something like, "Okay. But. . ."

And she would explode. "But that doesn't mean anything to you!" she'd say. "Because men don't know anything about sharing feelings!"

So then she got a job, and now every time I want her to do something with me, she has to work. So I complain.

And she says, "Now you know how it feels! So just don't complain!"

So I say, "Wait a minute. *You* always complained. Now *you* know how it. . ."

She says, "You're critical! You're not supportive! You don't want me to work! It's all right for *you* to work. But when *I* work, you feel threatened."

So I say, "Wait a minute. You say men don't know anything about sharing feelings. But when I try to get you to feel the way I felt when you felt the way you used to feel, let alone try to tell you how it feels for me to feel the way you used to feel, you want me to shut up and feel the way I used to feel when you complained all the time *and* the way *you* used to feel when you complained all the time—and yet *you won't let me complain!*"

Only I don't say that. Because I get lost about halfway through.

It's no contest. Women can bitch better than men. Women can hold down a job and *still* bitch better than men. □

MUSIC

HARD-WON DIRECTNESS

BY LLOYD SCHWARTZ



THERE SEEMS to be so little interest in serious contemporary music that one tends to get suspicious of any composer who begins to stand out. What's the gimmick? Who's the connection? Which record company is launching a new ad campaign? But the more one scrutinizes the career of John Harbison, the more one sees that if he has begun to cast his shadow—as a "New Romantic,"

a "tune man," a "radical conservative," or a "conservative radical," all labels the press has attached to him—the reason is simply that his music is more memorable, more moving, and less easily pigeonholed than the music of anyone else in his generation.

Harbison, forty-five, is currently on leave from the MIT music faculty and in the second half of a two-year appointment as the Pittsburgh Symphony's first composer-in-residence. His First Symphony, one of the Boston Symphony's twelve centennial commissions, will be given its world premiere this month. His latest full-scale orchestral work—an hour-long ballet in two parts, *Ulysses' Raft* and *Ulysses' Bow*—will receive a double premiere this spring in New Haven and Pittsburgh.

Last June, Harbison's *Deep Potomac Bells*, commissioned by the International Tuba Conference for the 350th anniversary of the State of Maryland, was performed by 200 tubas and euphoniums on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. It was a spectacular media event—two orchestras, each with a hundred instruments glittering gold and silver in the Washington sunlight; cameramen, photographers, and sound engineers jockeying for positions; streams of pedestrian and vehicular traffic trying to catch a glimpse. But what will be remembered is the work itself—a superbly and concisely organized fantasy on the musical intervals of "O Maryland," jubilantly rising in fanfare and descending like fireworks in dotted carillon scales. The shifting accents, the tune itself, and the looking around at the tune are typical Harbison features; but most his own is the slow middle section, a melancholy, even ominous, interlude of lyric depression, surprisingly inward-looking for such a joyous public occasion—a gentle reminder that the inner voice must not be ignored, even in a crowd of brassy extroverts.

Also typical of Harbison in *Deep Potomac Bells* are the brave directness of structure and immediacy of feeling balanced against the enlivening complexity of rhythmic and textural details. Such richness has always been a part of Harbison's output, but the directness took a while to achieve. For instance, jazz and popular music have always been an important part of Harbison's life. In high school, he formed a jazz band, and continued to play jazz piano while studying classical viola. At Harvard, the com-

poser Walter Piston told Harbison that he should stick to popular music. (Like Elliott Carter thirty years earlier, Harbison became an English major and continued his formal musical training only as a graduate student.) But it was years before Harbison was able to make jazz rhythms or Gershwin harmonies an integral part of his music. In early compositions like *Bermuda Triangle* (1970; recorded on CRI 313), a trio for tenor sax, amplified cello, and electric organ, and the still earlier *Confinement* (1965; on Nonesuch H-71221), the jazzy passages Harbison included were merely a source of irony—either lugged-in juxtapositions to the academic polyphony and atonality he had absorbed in graduate school from his Princeton pedagogues or satiric anachronisms like those of Peter Maxwell Davies, who had visited Princeton when Harbison was there. *Confinement*, Harbison's close-knit, bitter elegy for his father, combines twelve-tone palindrome techniques, wailing, bluesy brassy and winds, and delicate Latin rhythms in piano and percussion, and is based on a subtext from Donne's *Devotions*. "I sleep not day or night" is the epigraph to the third section, in which a nasty trombone blurts out something like "Some of these days, you'll miss me, honey." The punning title suggests both his father's illness and Harbison's own self-imposed formal and emotional restrictions.

By 1974, Harbison had broken away from that ironic distancing with his first opera, *Winter's Tale*, a setting of his own condensed version of Shakespeare's late romance. Harbison's musical language here began to be essentially harmonic—voices anchored on a bass line that has a separate character and function. He turned away from the principles of the academic gods, Schoenberg and Webern, to the less fashionable principles of Haydn, Brahms, and Verdi. *Winter's Tale* is full of powerfully original touches—Leontes howling his jealousy in falsetto, some enchantingly syncopated pastoral songs, and, most significant, six colorful and moving "Dumb Shows" (which have often been played as a separate concert piece), the musical equivalent of a mechanical clock that hides within it a time bomb.

Harbison exchanged irony for another form of distancing—what he has called "ritual theater." The characters in *Winter's Tale* represent states of mind, abstract forces, without their detailed,

Lloyd Schwartz is the classical-music editor of *The Boston Phoenix* and the author of *These People*, a collection of poems.

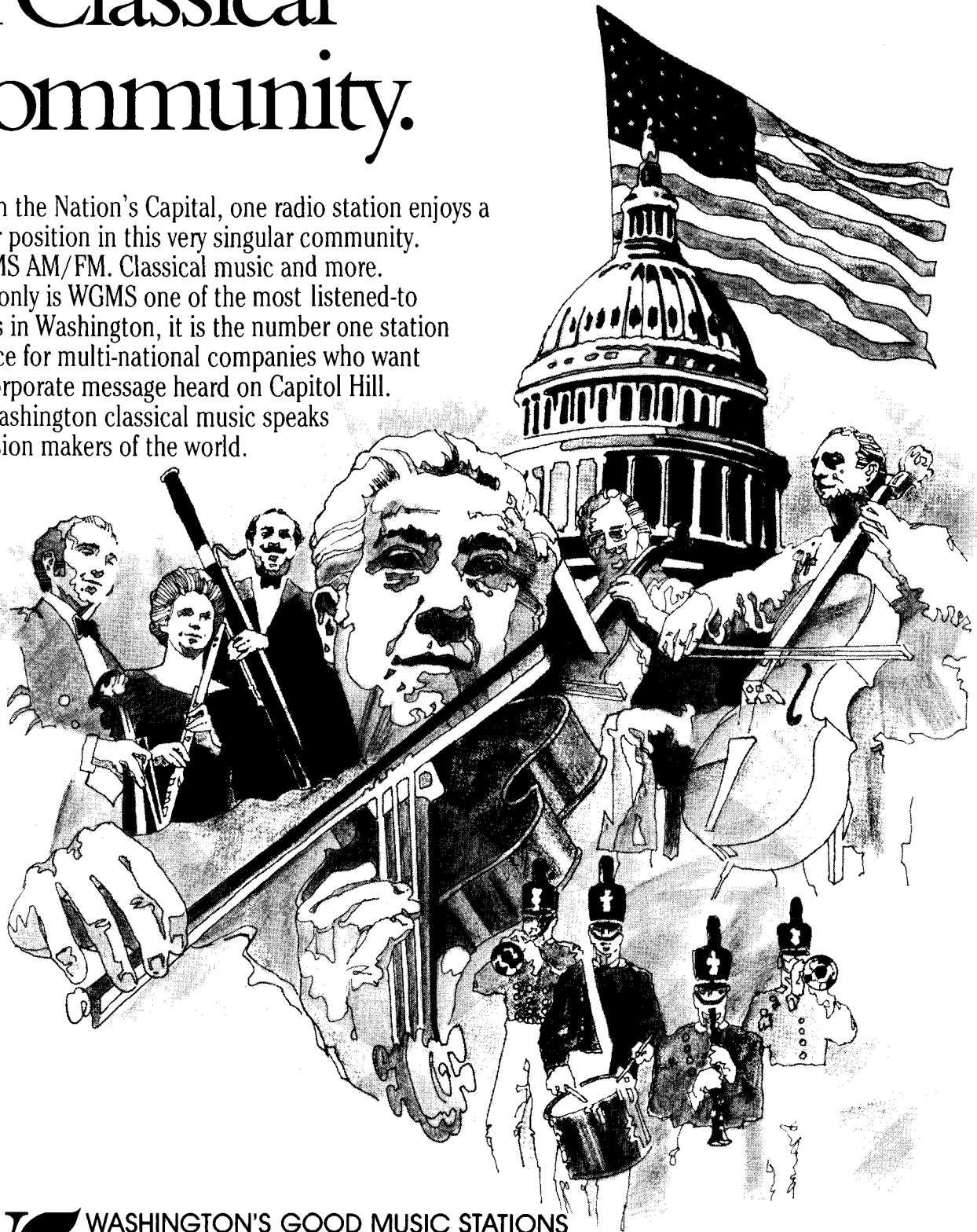
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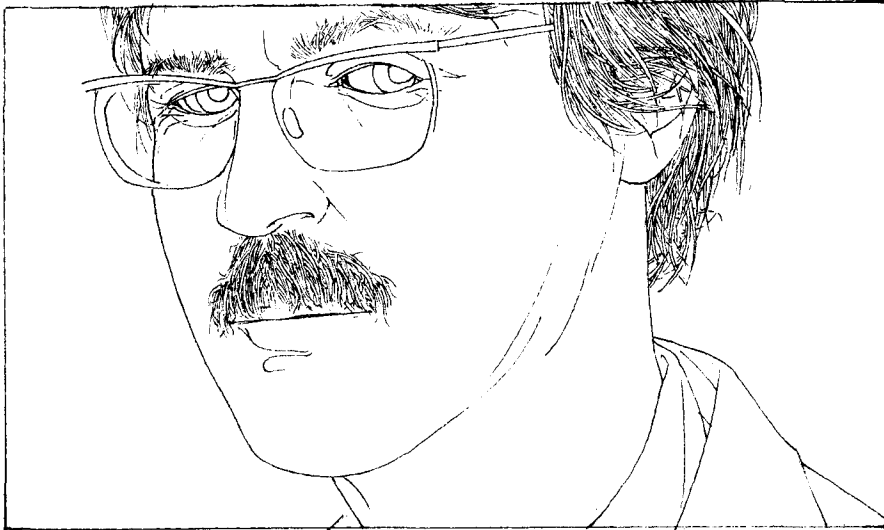
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Shakespearean realities. *Samuel Chapter* (1978), an exotically scored cantata based on the King James version of I Samuel (and clearly developed out of Harbison's years of conducting Bach and Schütz), and a second opera, a setting of Yeats's symbolic one-act play *Full Moon in March* (1977; just issued in a brilliant performance by its original cast on CRI 454), pursue this idea of ritual action.

In *Full Moon*, both the vocal and the instrumental writing reach a pitch of steamy intensity in the conflict between hero and heroine, the swineherd and the Queen (who also represent body and spirit, artist and muse). This intensity is even more dramatic in the contrast between the gorgeous "operatic" recitatives of the principals and the almost Tin Pan Alley, or at least off-Broadway,

sound image of ideal beauty that concludes with a brief, violent outburst. Harbison describes in the BSO program notes the bafflement that he felt each time he tried to introduce a more conventional counter-idea earlier in the piece.

It was with a strange sense of confirmation and communication with the occult that I stumbled on Hölderlin's first Diotima poem, a hymn to personified beauty and the glorious classical age, which concludes with a tempest of NOW. It gave a sense of sanction and also strengthened my conviction that the first generation of Romantics is always with us, their vision partially diverted and unfulfilled by what came after.



tunes sung by their two Greek-chorus-like Attendants. *Full Moon* is Harbison's first thorough success in incorporating popular idioms in a serious work. But the price of ritualizing is that some of the already obscure plot twists are buried in the variegated but thickly woven texture of the opera; as in *Winter's Tale*, the climax—here a brutally exciting erotic dance—eschews a fundamental operatic impulse, the dramatic collision of voices.

Harbison's obsession with the ritualistic, the mystical, and the abstract seems to come from some deep instinct. *Full Moon in March*, he writes in his notes for the recording, "was written in a non-reflective state, well before any effort to understand the matter beyond the absorption of the images." *Diotima* (1976), his first orchestral work played by the Boston Symphony, presents a trance-like

EVERY NEW DIRECTION for Harbison seems to have required him to go to an extreme. The unusually long-breathed and edgeless lyricism of *Diotima* reappears in *Snow Country* (1978–1979), a luscious money-in-the-bank homage to Sibelius for oboe and strings, with a midwestern accent, that he now finds too leisurely and refuses to release to performers. The first movement of the Piano Concerto (written in 1978 and the winner of the Kennedy Center–Friedheim Award in 1980; recorded on CRI 440) begins as another extreme investigation of a melody that seems never to stop; but in the second movement, the long breaths break down into a breathless march, a Piaf-style ditty, and—after a hilariously overblown cello recitative out of the Beethoven Ninth—an Astor-roof foxtrot. A languorous, searching oboe theme in the Romanza of the mar-

velous Woodwind Quintet (1978; CRI 436) is interrupted by a lumbering sequence for horn and flute, suggesting a forest tryst spoiled by a children's-book elephant and a flock of sparrows. By the time of the Violin Concerto—written from 1979 to 1980 for his wife, the violinist Rose Mary Harbison—the long line had been abandoned for the idea of the melodic kernel, the brief interval from which all outward development grows.

Roger Sessions, the teacher who probably had the most influence on Harbison, has always encouraged young composers to locate the personality of each piece rather than expend energy on developing and projecting their own voices. By refusing the demands of the marketplace for an easily identifiable style, and by concentrating on the work itself, Harbison has discovered the voice he wasn't looking for: humane, poetic, flexible, guardedly optimistic, but with a pervasive resignation to the inevitability of pain and disappointment. The pieces since the Violin Concerto have had more and more complex musical and emotional identities, binding together lyricism and irony, humor and sadness, classical and popular procedures, and a mysterious intimacy—all within large-scale structures that have become, if anything, increasingly lucid and accessible.

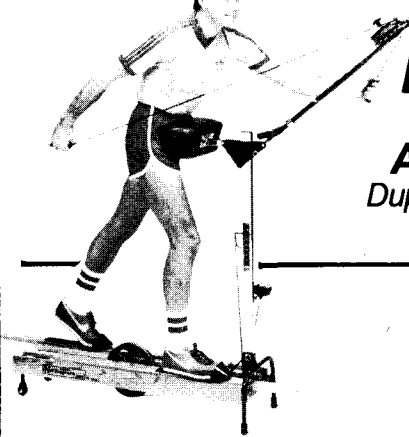
Mottetti di Montale (1980) is the longest and most ambitious of Harbison's numerous song cycles—works that have embraced Shakespeare, Blake (*Five Songs of Experience*; CRI 313), Hardy, Goethe, Dickinson, and contemporary poets such as Michael Fried, Gary Snyder, and Ian Hamilton. Harbison's best-known work is probably *The Flower-Fed Buffaloes* (1976; Nonesuch H-71366), which includes Fried, Snyder, Vachel Lindsay, and Hart Crane. It is an elaborately structured, glamorously melodic public cantata about the "American paradox," for baritone, six-part chorus, and chamber orchestra, commissioned for the hundredth anniversary of the New York Bar Association. But far more complex and demanding in its inwardness is the *Mottetti*—a fifty-minute setting of a series of poems by the late Nobel laureate Eugenio Montale, written in 1939 and linking his experiences in the First World War with his memories of a lost love. Harbison arranges the poems into four "books," each representing a stage in Montale's feelings for the past: obsessive nostalgia, spiritual reunion,

alienation and bitterness, and, finally, a melancholy acceptance of the past as past. The music offers a clearer emotional progression than do Montale's sometimes hermetic personal references. Harbison's model is partly Schubert's *Winterreise*, though there's more in *Mottetti* of Schumann's leading with the piano than of Schubert's self-sufficient vocal melodies. Each song moves through an ever-changing continuum of moods and harmonies. There's also a touch of Hugo Wolf's inspired word- and scene-painting: skittish lizards, swarming Rimsky-Korsakov bumblebees, a barcarole, an ironic carioca, a chilling parody of the "Bell Song" from *Lakmé*. And everywhere are phrases of soaring melodic radiance. But it is the large design—harmonic, intellectual, emotional—so completely fulfilled in these details that finally makes this a work of such overwhelming power and significance.

The Piano Quintet (1981) is a more personal piece—a five-movement elegy for Harbison's sister Helen, who died of cancer in January of 1981. Parts of it sound far from elegiac: the three middle movements—Capriccio, Intermezzo, and Burletta (a raucous, Bartókian bear dance)—overflow with comic geniality. ("It's the kind of music Helen liked," Harbison has explained.) The Burletta, though, is interrupted by a string of insistent, almost whining downward slides on the violin, a kind of *vox clamantis* in the midst of the comedy. The bitterness of *Confinement* has turned into a more held-in, inward cry of pain. And the large last-movement Elegia lays it on the line. In the final piano tremolos, Harbison returns to a gesture that dates back to one of his earliest piano pieces, the 1968 Parody-Fantasia (CRI 293)—a sinister death rattle, or the shaky wings of a newly departing soul.

Variations for Clarinet, Violin, and Piano (1982) has no such emotional program. The fifteen Variations, plus Finale and Epilogue, do just what one would expect in a classical work: reveal every imaginable combination of the instruments in eloquent and surprising ways. But the cumulative dramatic structure is similar to that of the *Mottetti* and the Quintet—a musical arch intensifying in wildness and concision which finally lets go, singing or waltzing away into quiet retrospection, introspection, and elegy. Harbison's first impulse had been to compose a series of ritual dances suggested by a sculpture of Astarte, the Ca-

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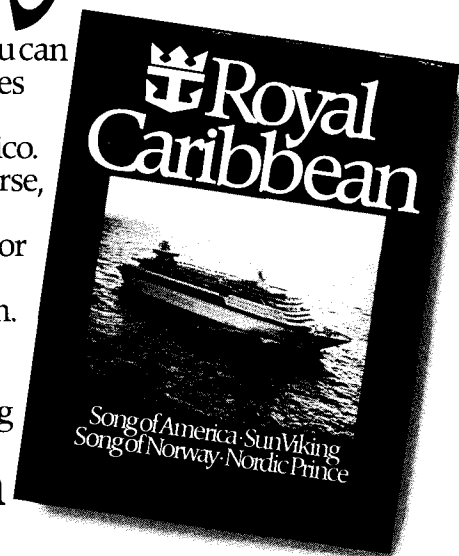
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naanite fertility goddess. In the end, the drama of musical ideas took over, and, paradoxically, psychological realism and forthrightness, even though they are expressed abstractly, won out over the forces of abstraction and ritualization.

Harbison's most recently introduced full-scale work is another song cycle—the *Mirabai Songs*, based on Robert Bly's translations of the sixteenth-century Indian poet, who turned religious ecstatic after the death of her husband and sang and danced her songs to Krishna ("the Dark One") in the streets. These six songs move between fast and slow tempos and stable and unstable rhythms, sometimes in surprising combinations. Their musical language derives from the Montale settings and the wildest of the Variations, but with exhilaratingly subtle Eastern twists of phrase. The poems express the tensions between the visionary and the mundane: "I don't steal money, I don't hit anyone. What will you charge me with? I have felt the swaying of the elephant's shoulders; and now you want me to climb on a jackass? Try to be serious." For a mystic, Mirabai is refreshingly aware of the earthy. Harbison has felt these tensions himself. His music once again plants its dancing feet on the shifting but solid ground. □

THEATER
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 BY LLOYD ROSE



TO CREATE A masterpiece and have it go unrecognized is the artist's nightmare. John Guare has been living that nightmare for nearly two years, ever since *Gardenia* and *Lydie Breeze* opened in New York, almost back to back, in early 1982, met with mixed reviews and small audiences, and closed after four weeks. These two plays of his as-yet-unfinished *Lydie Breeze* cycle (a third, *Women and Water*, will open next autumn at the Los Angeles Actors' Theatre) can be taken together, as two parts

of one great theatrical whole. As such, they are an extraordinary memory-drama of our country's past, as personally and luminously vivid as any autobiographical play, part farce, part tragedy, part parody, part dream. *Gardenia* and *Lydie Breeze* are not only the finest and most sophisticated response to the dashed ideals of the sixties by any American filmmaker or dramatist but also a majestic fulfillment of the themes and obsessions that Guare has been spinning across the stage for the past eighteen years.

Of the three major American dramatists of the seventies—the other two are generally acknowledged to be Lanford Wilson and Sam Shepard—Guare is the odd man out. Where Wilson is sentimental and lyrical and Shepard visceral and mythic, Guare is cerebral, a little abstract. He writes music (he did the songs for his most popular play, *The House of Blue Leaves*), and his plays feel like librettos set to some manic melody he can't get out of his head. Certainly they give the sense, as John Stuart Mill wrote of poetry, of having been *overheard*. Guare is in love with language, and the American dreamers of his plays revel in talk. They tell long, marvelous stories. They give long, impassioned monologues. And they never really listen to one another. As a playwright, Guare is the heir of Chekhov, whose comedy lies in his characters' self-involvement.

Guare's people are not paying any attention to one another because they're focused on their dreams, wherever those may lie: in the future, in the past, inside their heads. They have had images of what they would become, the lives they would lead, but somehow none of it is working out and they can't understand why. In his foreword to *The House of Blue Leaves*, Guare equates this situation with living in Queens (where the play is set and where Guare was born, in 1938, and spent his Irish Catholic boyhood). Each is a temporary stopover until things get better and one can move on and up, "the pay-off that [is] the birthright of every American." But no one moves on and up. Chekhov's three sisters never got to Moscow; Guare's characters never get to Manhattan. In their collective voice, he writes:

Why don't I get the breaks? What happened? I'm hip. I'm hep. I'm a New Yorker. The heart of the action. Just a subway ride to the heart of the action. I want to be part of that sky-

line. I want to blend into those lights. Hey dreams, I dreamed you. I'm not something you curb a dog for. New York is where it all is. So why aren't I here?

Guare's characters are desperate to avoid reality, so it falls on them and smashes their heads. In the course of their farcical, selfish scrambling they meet terrible fates: a boy is decapitated; two analysts stab each other; a man strangles his crazy wife; lovers are shot; suicides are committed; nuns explode. "Why shouldn't Strindberg and Feydeau get married, at least live together . . . ?" Guare writes in the foreword to *The House of Blue Leaves*.

The majority of Guare's protagonists, in their single-minded fixation on what they think will make them happy, are in the mainstream tradition of farce. But most of Guare's plays aren't structured as farce. His comedy isn't generated primarily by plot but through words. Guare has the ear of a poet-vaudevillian. In this respect, he is like Beckett, but he's less self-consciously poetic and more fun-loving. He hears the underlying patterns of speech and understands the comic surprises to be had from putting a spin on the expectations that a sentence's form arouses in a listener. What is probably Guare's most famous line (owing to its being in a movie, *Atlantic City*, rather than a play) is a perfect example of his comic sense of language at work: Lou, an aging, second-rate mobster, what few days of glory he has had long gone, gazes at the sea and tells a young punk, "The Atlantic Ocean used to be something. You should have seen the Atlantic Ocean in those days."

GUARE APPEARS TO love language not just because it can render his ideas but for its own sake. Words arouse his curiosity: he bats them around to see what will happen. A hint of this objective fascination shows up in the opening lines of his early one-act play, *The Loveliest Afternoon of the Year*. A young woman feeding pigeons in Central Park is confronted by a frantic young man:

HE. (*Terror-stricken.*) I don't want you feeding pigeons because I just saw pigeons at the Seventy Ninth Street Entrance and the covey of them—the whole bunch of them—whatever you call a bunch of pigeons—a gaggle—all those pigeons had foam— (*She stops rummaging*

Lloyd Rose is the literary manager of New Playwrights' Theatre, in Washington, D.C.

through her purse.) Were foaming at the mouths.

SHE. (*Simply.*) I'll scream.

HE. At the beaks? Pigeons were foaming at the beaks—all of them.

Bunch. Covey. Gaggle. Mouths. Beaks. In the very act of warning, he is searching for the exact word to convey the odd reality of pigeons foaming like mad dogs.

Rabid pigeons are tame stuff for Guare; his plays are full of much stranger happenings. A man has a sex-change operation and then, through artificial insemination, fathers his/her own child. A woman stuffs her cancerous wound with Kotex and, to cure herself, stands by a window in the night air, waving a statue of Saint Jude. One of the lions outside the New York Public Library comes alive and eats a member of the staff . . .

But the action of the plays is not as wild as these events, which the audience is told about rather than shown. It's the extraordinary, language-drunk monologues that burst with craziness. The static, nonconnecting predicaments of Guare's people translate directly into his dramatic style. Large portions of his plays are taken up with discussions of what has happened or what will happen; the present of the drama is the characters' relating to the past and the future. One can crudely describe the structure of a Guare play as a series of monologues thrown together by a more-or-less arbitrary plot: the monologues bounce against one another until something cracks. This is a peculiar method of constructing plays. But although Guare may break all the rules of dramatic structure, he still commands the only talent a playwright really needs: he makes an audience ask "What next?"

They may often have asked more in vexation than in eagerness. Guare has written his share of plays that simply don't work. *Marco Polo Sings a Solo*, which is set in the Arctic Circle, is chock full of one nutty thing after another—not only the transsexual who fathers his/her own child but also gestation-shortening rays and plants that sprout out of a character's hands. *Bosoms and Neglect* attempts to connect neglected lives with neglected authors and to juggle this conceit with cancer. But Guare is frequently most brilliant when he is most off the wall. His mad, glittering failures, whatever their faults as plays, are always unmistakably the work of a great writer.

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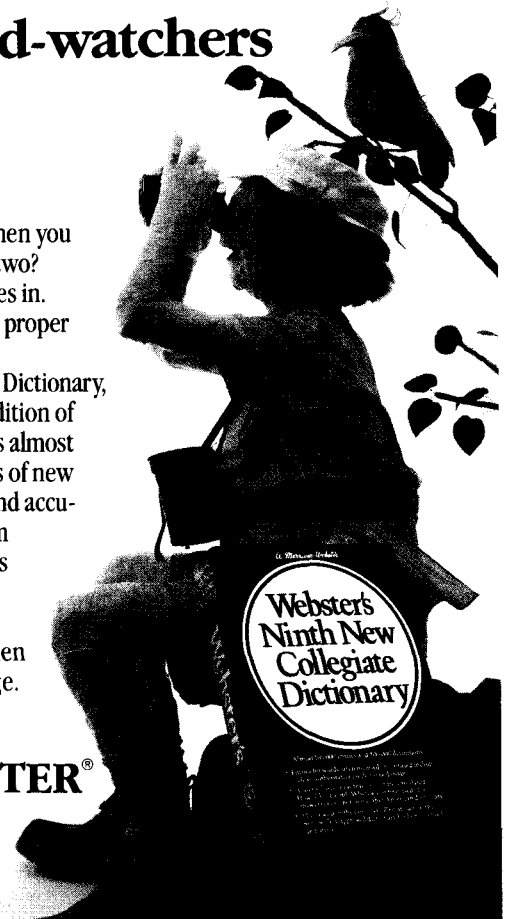
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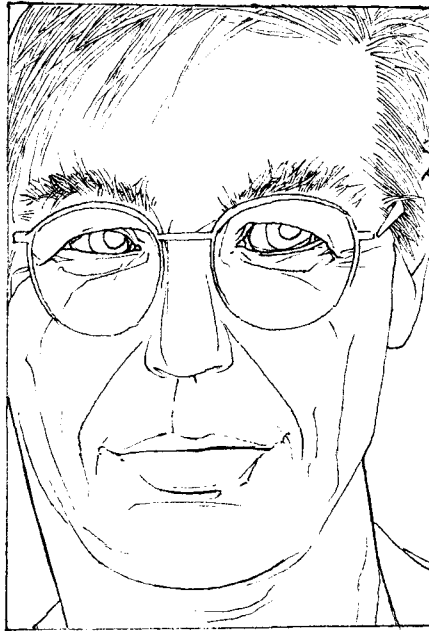
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Beginning with *Atlantic City*, after five years or so of plays in which he experimented with the relationship between form and theme, Guare found new assurance and control. *Atlantic City* is tightly plotted, and its characters' dreams, rather than humiliating or destroying them, are magically, rightly fulfilled. Every one of the characters gets what he or she deserves and some of them get what they want. Violent, funny, and amoral, *Atlantic City* affirms the strength of the American dream, which rises in all its acquisitiveness and hopefulness, along with the new casinos, from the rubble of buildings torn down and days gone by.

Before *Atlantic City*, Guare hadn't made much use of time and place. His plays are mostly set in a rather featureless New York City, which is really Queens-as-a-state-of-mind. But much of the success of *Atlantic City* derives from the metaphorical perfection of its setting. *Atlantic City* itself is an extension of the characters, who derive their identities and drive from its bold, greedy new world. And in *Gardenia* and *Lydie Breeze* (which he was working on at roughly the same time as *Atlantic City*: the movie was released in 1981 and both plays were first staged in 1982), he links his characters' dreams and the ruin of those dreams to the idealism and the corruption of American society in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

THE CHARACTERS IN *Gardenia* and *Lydie Breeze* are an organic part of the America they live in. They are destroyed by forces in our history, and their corruptibility—the fragility of their idealism—is what makes that history destructive. They're not just society's victims; they're its shapers, too. The sophistication, toughness, and breadth of this social vision lifts *Gardenia* and *Lydie Breeze* above Guare's other work and to the pinnacle of American drama.

Guare interweaves personal and social history, using American transcendentalism, that idealistic nineteenth-century philosophy that postulated a mystical unity among all things in the universe, and which had its most concrete expression in the utopian community of Brook Farm (Hawthorne's *Blithedale*, in *The Blithedale Romance*). Guare's utopians are three Civil War veterans and the woman who nursed them in the hospital, *Lydie Breeze*. They set up their com-



mune, which they whimsically name Aipotu, on Nantucket Island at the war's end, rejecting the America being formed by the likes of Andrew Carnegie and Jay Gould and led by Ulysses S. Grant, and vowing to find the transcendental purpose of their lives.

Taking *Lydie's* husband, Joshua Hickman, as his focal character, Guare presents the corruption, ruin, and final regeneration of Aipotu, by dramatizing four days in its history: one in 1875, when the book Joshua has worked on for seven years is rejected by William Dean Howells, and when *Lydie's* lover, Dan Grady, brings into the community money acquired by graft; one in 1884, when Joshua, imprisoned for murdering Dan, destroys his new book, which Howells has greeted as an American masterpiece; and two days in 1895, when all the threads of the plot and all the guilt and horror work themselves into a final pattern of healing and rebirth.

Guare's decision to set *Gardenia* and *Lydie Breeze* in the nineteenth century, which might seem as if it would have restricted him, turns out to be a master's choice. The history and thought of the nineteenth century mirror and give form to his themes of isolation and connection. He lays the foundations of the plays solidly in nineteenth-century American literature. Emerson, who believed, as Irving Howe put it, that "individual regeneration must precede social politics . . ." is the infusing spirit of *Gardenia*. *Lydie Breeze*, which opens in a Gothic dawn with *Lydie* dead and her namesake daughter trying to communi-

cate with her, is haunted by Poe; the girl's eventual final acceptance by Joshua (she is Dan's daughter, not his) and her own acceptance of her coming womanhood are a healing variant of Poe's neurotic obsession with the dead beloved who rises from her grave. *Gardenia* opens and *Lydie Breeze* closes with Joshua reading lines from Whitman that express the soul and hope of the plays:

A vast similitude interlocks all.
All spheres, grown, ungrown,
small, large, suns, moons, planets,
All distances of time. All souls
All lives and deaths, all of the past,
present, future,
This vast similitude spans them,
and always has spanned
And shall forever span them and
compactly hold and enclose them.

Whitman, Emerson, and Poe shape and integrate these plays as they shaped and expressed the America about which Guare is writing.

Guare also makes a concession to the nineteenth century in his language. He shapes his dialogue more formally than usual, and it has a new purity and beauty: it's lyrical, yet steely. It is not really like nineteenth-century language as we know it from books and letters of the time. Stylized and reduced to its essential rhythms, it has an archaic, haunted sound. And because we don't actually know what casual American speech was like then, its strangeness makes it begin to seem real. It transports us fully into Guare's nineteenth century, at the same time that it distances us, reminding us by its alien tone that we are looking into a world buried forever beneath the wars, technology, and politics of our own century.

IN A VERY BASIC sense, *Gardenia* and *Lydie Breeze* are nineteenth-century plays. Guare takes as his model Ibsen, in whose dramatic territory of social disintegration and sexual misalliance he is working. In *Lydie Breeze*, we follow the story by the movement of syphilis through the characters. The transmission of the infection is our clue to the play—who had it first? who had it when?—and our efforts to track it become a macabre game. This brilliant gloss on *Ghosts* (a perfect alternate title for *Lydie Breeze*) fulfills Guare's dramatic purposes; at the same time, it both acknowledges Ibsen's mastery of plot and turns him on his head.



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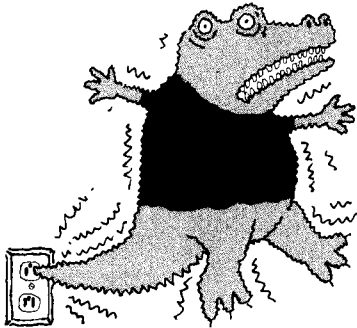
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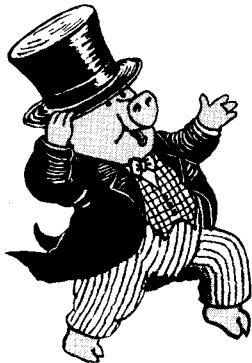
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LITTLE, BROWN

Guare jams the plays with adultery, murder, madness, theft, injury, mistaken identity, blackmail. These are the same melodramatic clichés from which Ibsen built his dramas. But whereas Ibsen transcended them through superb craftsmanship and the force of his moral sensibility, Guare merrily piles them one atop the other until they tumble over, a satiric abundance of misfortunes that explodes the conventions of nineteenth-century melodrama through overcrowding.

And each horror is dramatized with a deft and startling eccentricity. Just after we have heard a terrible and graphic account of Lydie's suicide (she hanged herself), Guare gives us that dawn seance, in which young Lydie is instructed to tell her mother's spirit what she has learned. She recites a recipe, getting most of the quantities wrong and leaving out the salt and the nutmeg.

This tonal shift is so abrupt it's disorienting; it's as sudden and frightening (yet mysteriously right) as the dislocations we experience in dreams. We're watching peoples' lives and hopes, and our country's idealism, collapse. We have every reason to expect sober austerity. What we get is jokes, looniness, images that seem to have been thrown in from the wings. It's as if Ibsen had been translated by Lewis Carroll.

Not that Guare can't be straightforward enough when he pleases. The center of the plays lies in a simple conversation Lydie and Joshua have when she visits him in prison. "We wanted perfection," she says. "So we thought we were perfection." He confesses to her that he murdered Dan not from fierce, romantic passion but for small reasons, ending ruefully, "Oh Christ—in all our dreaming, we never allowed for the squalid, petty furies. We lived on a beach in a vast landscape. We mistook the size of the ocean, the size of the sky, for the size of our souls."

But Guare prefers to work elliptically, skidding past the dangers of pretension and dullness. Toward the end of *Lydie Breeze*, he puts forward the idea that perhaps the only possible connection between people is forgiveness. Where a lesser playwright might have given us a long and boringly message-ridden soliloquy, Guare uses a Ouija board. Gussie, Joshua and Lydie's daughter, is playing with it, and it keeps spelling out FORG. Joshua tells her it means she should "Forget here. Forget your father. Forget

Nantucket." Gussie retorts that it means "forge ahead. For Gussie. Forget me not. Forgo any bad thoughts." Neither of them figures out what the letters are actually spelling, but during this scene they forgive each other. And by the play's end, Joshua has forgiven young Lydie, whom he has brought up as his own but never truly accepted, for being Dan's child.

IT'S THIS TENSION between Guare's bizarre sense of invention and the dramatic and social conventions of the nineteenth century that sets the plays spinning like a top: the core may sleep on an axis of loss and dreams, but the surface is whirling. Guare's refusal to tell his story straight, his commitment to the unexpected and the berserk, gives *Gardenia* and *Lydie Breeze* a giddy exhilaration. They're a screwball epic.

Yet for all their whirligig plotting and crazy humor, they're graceful where his other plays were frenetic, sustained in their power rather than explosive. Their American past is as much Guare's invention as his Queens or Arctic Circle, but whereas those settings seemed like nutty dreams, his Nantucket colony has the glow and the distortion of memory. The plays roll through lives and years from the Civil War to the edge of the twentieth century, from hope to ruin to hope again, held and enclosed by that visionary fragment from Whitman.

But Guare has reached further back than Whitman for his underlying literary structure. It is late Shakespearean comedy, with its vision of healing and continuance in the reconciliation of fathers and daughters (*Lydie Breeze*, in particular, has its roots in *The Tempest*) that accounts for the mysterious serenity of Guare's plays. By their final scene, all scores have been settled, all lovers have found each other, the father and his daughters have made peace. Young Lydie, waiting on her first suitor and her approaching menstruation, sits beside Joshua, and he teaches her to read: "All spheres, grown, ungrown, small, large. . . ."

At the beginning of *Gardenia*, Guare has Howells write to Joshua, "Let the brisk air of America blow through your vigorous imagination." Guare has taken his own advice. That air blows through *Gardenia* and *Lydie Breeze*—the bracing air we breathe only rarely, and then only on the heights. □

BOOKS

CLEARHEADED BULLY

BY PAUL FUSSELL

MASTER OF THE BATTLEFIELD: MONTY'S WAR YEARS, 1942-1944

by Nigel Hamilton. McGraw-Hill, \$25.95.



"THE MONTGOMERY PROBLEM" — That was a phrase often heard around American military headquarters in Europe during the Second World War, where General Sir Bernard Law Montgomery's vanity, contempt, bossiness, and outright disobedience occasioned much wonder and fury. His behavior seemed to illustrate perfectly the axiom that the trouble with war is that it brings the bullies to the top. The English writer Nigel Hamilton, Monty's close friend and admirer, is currently shedding light on the Montgomery problem in an immense authorized biography of some 2,500 pages, of which this hefty book is the second volume of three. Because Hamilton thinks as highly of Monty as Monty himself did, the light he sheds, even if it does emanate from a mountain of personal papers, orders, memoranda, diaries, and letters, is too glaring and "official" to allow for a very subtle biographical job. A more dispassionate approach would be needed to sort out Monty's mingled strands of good sense and childishness, knowledge and ignorance, courtesy (rare) and rudeness (virtually constant), in order to arrive at

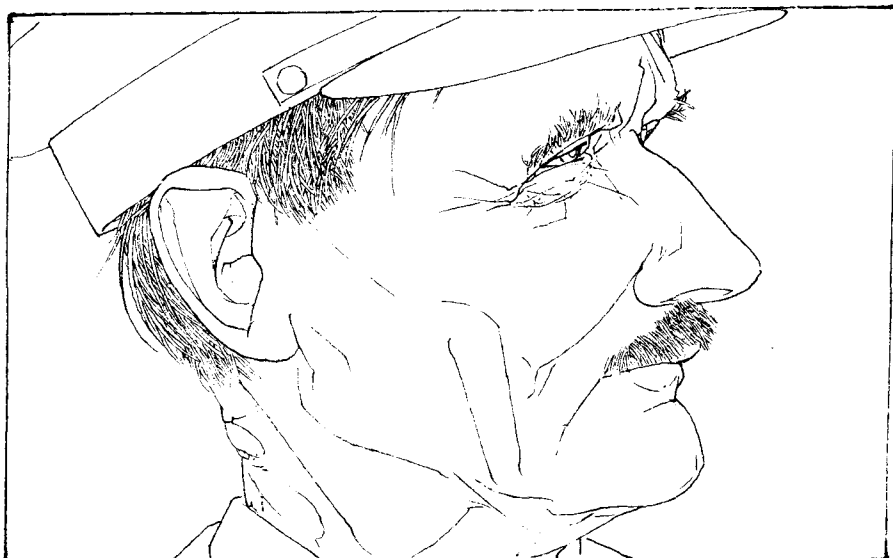
a just estimate not only of his character but also of his military successes and failures. If Hamilton for the most part provides military hagiography, defending Monty's every decision against American strictures, in the process he also writes some admirably detailed military history, and devotees of strategy and tactics will find this book absorbing.

Hamilton begins the narrative just after the battle of El Alamein, in the winter of 1942-1943, when, according to Monty's many detractors, his delay in pursuing the routed Germans and Italians allowed too many of them to return to Europe to fight again. Monty's gingering-up of the Eighth Army—his dramatic raising of its morale by constant inspirational talks and cigarette handouts, not to mention outlandish headgear and visible contempt for traditional British military snobberies—rapidly produced an extremely effective force, which stood in contrast to the green troops of the United States Army, then in disgrace at the Kasserine Pass. "The real trouble with the Americans," Monty observed, "is that the soldiers won't fight." Next came the conquest of Sicily and the childish competition with the childish Patton over who could attain his objectives first. Monty was criticized again

for his delay in crossing the Straits of Messina and in moving up the Italian peninsula to link with Mark Clark's dicey beachhead at Salerno. Plucked away from Italy to help plan the invasion of France, back in England, Monty, flushed with success, increased his contumelious, bullying behavior toward all staffs but his own. Once in Normandy, Monty went so far in open contempt toward Eisenhower, to whom he was subordinate, patronizing him and ordering him about, that the Supreme Commander remonstrated: "Steady, Monty! You can't speak to me like that. I'm your boss." (Earlier, Monty had humiliated Ike, a four-pack-a-day man, by barking just before Ike lit up: "I don't permit smoking in my office.") Hamilton concludes by adverting to further difficulties between Monty and the rest of the Allies: their annoyance over his failure to seize Caen fast enough, and over his apparent lack of dash in helping to seal the Falaise Pocket, a lapse that again allowed masses of German troops to escape and fight on, in the Ardennes and at Arnhem.

Throughout, at issue between Monty and the Americans was the nature of successful coalition attack: should it occur on a broad front with equal pressure in a number of spots, or should it consist of one immensely strong, deeply planned, totally air-protected and artillery-prepared thrust? It is Hamilton's conviction that if Monty's single-thrust strategy had prevailed over Eisenhower's (and Marshall's and Bradley's) broad-front idea, the war would have ended in the early fall of 1944, saving countless lives—among them, Hamilton rather too cunningly suggests, Anne Frank's. This attempt to cast the rest of us in the role of unwitting but still reprehensible accomplices in the destruction of the innocent ("For Anne Frank . . . the Allies had simply arrived too late") is typical of the means Hamilton resorts to in arguing Monty's wisdom on every military occasion.

DESPITE HIS ADVOCACY of the Monty solution to every crisis, Hamilton's military history, though sometimes repetitive and heavy, is usually illuminating and even exciting. Equally interesting is the revelation of Monty's character, the objectionable elements of which even Hamilton is unable to whitewash. Perhaps Monty's lifelong skill in taking cheap advantage and practicing a very British type of gamesman-



Paul Fussell is the author of *The Great War and Modern Memory*.

ship reflected anxiety over having been treated as a colonial outsider while young. He grew up in Tasmania, where his father was the Anglican bishop. He passed through St. Paul's School and Sandhurst, earning little glory except in athletics and military drill. On the line in France during the Great War, he barely survived a severe chest wound, and it has been assumed that it was the spectacle of the clumsy failed attacks in France that impressed upon him two crucial principles: the indispensability of complete, meticulous planning before battle, and the importance of morale, soldiers being always terrified and on the brink of running away. His happy marriage he arranged on military lines, with lots of "planning," and when his wife died young, acquaintances—friends were few—noticed rigidity overtaking an already eccentric personality. In the 1930s, he was a regimental commander in India and Palestine. At Dunkirk, he commanded a division, and his redemption of the Eighth Army in North Africa and his sound thrashing of the enemy there may be seen as an act of revenge for that embarrassment.

It was one of Monty's convictions that, with the possible exceptions of Rommel and Bradley, he was the only really professional soldier in the whole war. Everyone else was an incompetent amateur. Much of his correspondence, both official and unofficial, was devoted to slanderous cuttings-down of colleagues and superiors. "Corbett was, and is, the stupidest officer in the Indian Army," he wrote. "Jumbo Wilson is, of course, no good." General Alexander is "not clever and has a slow brain." "Dickie Mountbatten is, of course, quite unfit to be a Supreme Commander." "I know Charles [Miller] well; he was a dismal failure in Africa and in Italy, and in my opinion is unfit to be a Major-General." Ike had never led troops in battle, nor even seen a dead body until April of 1943, and then only from the air. He was thus a mere theorist, "quite useless." For him Monty felt deep disdain: "His ignorance as to how to run a war is absolute and complete." During the battle for Normandy, Monty grew so outrageous in his belief in his own genius that Ike's deputy Arthur Tedder exerted great pressure to have him dismissed—an "intrigue," Hamilton loyally asserts, that must rank as "one of the most reprehensible performances by a senior Allied commander in modern battle history."

After the war, the scorn Monty poured on both Ike and Bradley in his *Memoirs* (1958) was such that neither ever spoke to him again.

And yet. No account of Monty's performances can quite dispense with the *and yet*, so complicated was this feisty, sharp-nosed, puritanical, obsessed, pedantic, self-righteous "little man on the make," as some termed him. Because he insisted on meticulous planning before action, because he bored people by unremittingly talking about the plan, following the plan, and afterward reviewing the correctness of the plan, his troops plucked up their courage, convinced that their lives would not be thrown away carelessly. Just before D-Day, he visited the Welsh Guards at four in the morning. He jumped up onto the hood of a jeep and said to the men, "Gather round." He asked one: "What's your most valuable possession?" "My rifle, sir." "No, it is not," Monty said. "It's your life, and I'm going to save it for you. Now listen to me." And he proceeded to outline the plan. A habit that endeared him to no one above the rank of major general but pleased many below was to receive from an Allied staff an elaborate plan for an operation, study it critically, and pronounce it thoroughly bad, drawn up by theorists with no battlefield experience, etc. He would then revise it, stiffen it, and hand it back in unrecognizable form to his chastened, humiliated superiors. If they demurred, he rammed it down their throats with insults, which, oddly, they frequently swallowed.

All this planning might suggest excessive complication in Monty's pre-battle arrangements. But no. In issuing orders he was notably simple and clear, with never a vague pronoun or an ambiguously expressed place designation. "Go for *utmost simplicity* in all things": that was one of his most frequent schoolmasterly injunctions. Things always go wrong in war, he knew, and he once said that a winning general is one who has been right 51 percent of the time. A curious latter-day example of a British empiricist, Monty knew that no amount of intelligence or good will could substitute for battle experience, and it was his pre-eminence here, in relation to all other high officers of his time, that enabled him so often to see the truth when others did not. It was Monty, not the Americans, who sensed that the Italians, after their armistice with the Allies, would never turn and fight the Germans. It

was Monty who sensed that the landing at Salerno was foolish and that the invasion of southern France was unnecessary, a mere exhibitionistic multiplication of threats that weakened the main effort in Normandy. But Monty could never dissimulate his conviction that his correct perceptions were the result of superior ratiocination rather than instinct or simple luck.

"One has to be a bit of a cad to succeed in the army," he once said, and added, "I am a bit of a cad." One reason he was considered a dangerous outsider by the British military establishment was his disparagement of the idea that sheer courage is the primary soldierly virtue. The novelist Anthony Powell, during the war a liaison officer in contact with Monty's headquarters, recalls that "he was not in the least impressed by the mystique of [the Victoria Cross]; indeed, [he was] alleged to declare its possession hinted at an undeniable foolhardiness on the part of the wearer."

In the context of forty years of subsequent history, Monty's oddities, his scorn and fury, may seem more than signs of mere personal eccentricity. Indeed, the Montgomery problem can be seen today as a particularly melodramatic instance of the whole Great Britain problem. During the period covered by this book, a worldwide transformation took place so palpably that no one could ignore it. As the war went on, the American contribution, "amateur" though it may have been, inexorably grew to outweigh the British. Which meant that while everyone watched, the United States firmly elbowed Britain off the world stage, replacing her there as the foremost English-speaking presence. This humiliating process had been in train for decades, of course, but the war accelerated it dramatically. Montgomery, initially the savior of a noble community fighting virtually alone, diminished as the war went on to a resentful junior partner of the coarse giants from over the water, superior to them, doubtless, in finesse and shrewdness, but clearly inferior in size and weight. For all his elevation to field marshal, during the war Monty suffered an implicit demotion. Hence the sad spectacle of his compensatory vanity, his strutting tactlessness, his dogmatism and contempt. Ultimately he becomes a pathetic figure, and I think Shakespeare, if he were looking around for a hero at once admirable and vulnerable, could do something with him. □

HOW REAGAN GOT THAT WAY

BY ROBERT SHERRILL

RONALD REAGAN: THE POLITICS OF SYMBOLISM

by Robert Dallek. Harvard University Press, \$16.50.



EVERY GOOD BIOGRAPHER of a President tries, of course, to do more than construct a neat and entertaining chronology of events. He also attempts to figure out why "his" President acted the way he did. If Harry Truman's experience as a First World War artillery captain or Lyndon Johnson's experience as a teacher of high school debating seems to have shaped later motivations, the biographer is not shy about mentioning the cause-effect relationship. That's standard procedure.

But in recent years, a new breed of biographers—psychobiographers—has appeared. They are a gung-ho crew who put the President on the couch and dig deep into his psyche, looking for the events in his development that will explain the oddities of his White House performance. The watershed book of this sort was James David Barber's *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*, published twelve years ago. Other, recent examples of the genre are Fawn M. Brodie's *Richard Nixon: The Shaping of His Character* (because of an abnormal childhood, Nixon suffered from inescapable self-doubt and paranoia, coupled with a love of being punished), which appeared in 1981, and Garry Wills's *The Kennedy Imprisonment: A Meditation on Power* (John Kennedy was a victim of a craving to perform with machismo, a victim of his father's training, and so on), published in 1982.

Robert Dallek's *Ronald Reagan: The Politics of Symbolism* is in the same tradition. Dallek is a professor of history at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a research associate at the Southern California Psychoanalytic Institute. As one would expect from a winner of the Bancroft Prize (for *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign*

Policy, 1932-1945), Dallek's probing of Reagan's skull is done in a graceful and lucid style. It is free of psychoanalytical cant, and anyone literate enough to read a ballot will have no problem following his argument.

However, I should warn readers that this is not, nor is it meant to be, a full-scale biography, and that they will miss much if they do not also read the two best standard biographies of the President so far. Lou Cannon's *Reagan*, which came out in 1982, is a particularly thorough and well-balanced centrist account of Reagan's life and career through 1981. Ronnie Dugger's *On Reagan: The Man and His Presidency*, published late last year, is a very detailed study (with a liberal bias) of Reagan as right-wing ideologue; Dugger is more concerned with policy than with personality. These books can supply the particulars that Dallek's lacks.

If more people in this country are desperate for work than were before Ronald Reagan became President, if the world's fuse is shorter, if the federal government is more chaotic and less responsive to the public's needs, the reason, says Dallek, is Reagan's mental confusion. His presidency is shaped by an obsession to recapture an idyllic childhood past, which never existed; he wants to lead America back to what he conceives as the Eden of Dixon, Illinois. He has a fanatical faith in "traditional values" that, in fact, had only a secondary influence on his own life. He preaches precepts that he has never had to live by.

Ronald Reagan, Dallek reminds us, grew up being taught that "energy and hard work were the only ingredients needed for success" and that education would give him "habits of industry." Reagan still believes these things with all his heart and wants us to believe them, although he knows from his own experience that luck—what Reagan calls being in the right place at the right time—can play the largest part in bringing success.

Luck certainly had much to do with his getting his first radio job, with his becoming a minor Hollywood success, with his finding a plush job as a propagandist for General Electric just as his acting star had fallen, and with the launching of his political career. As for education, Reagan's talent for showmanship and bluffing allowed him to avoid much of that.

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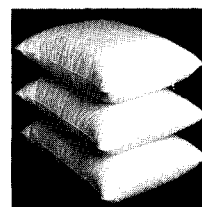
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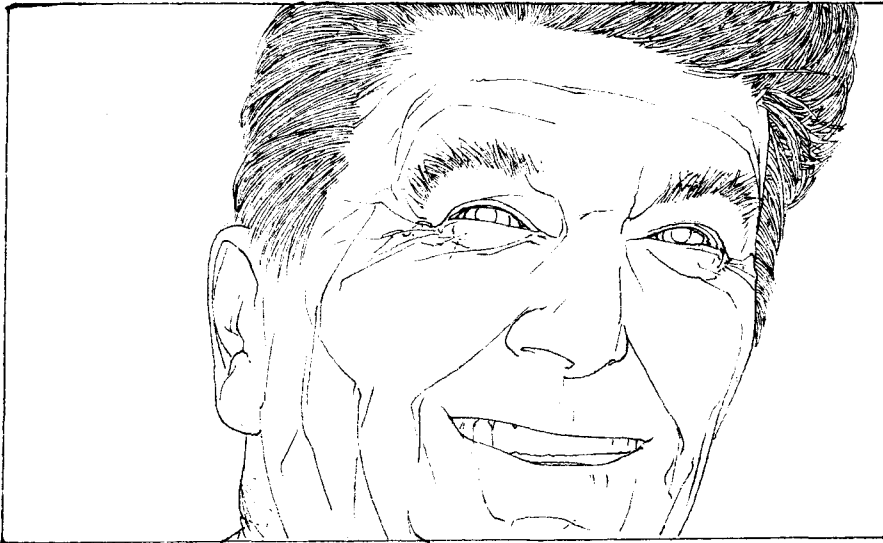
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Robert Sherrill is the author of *The Oil Follies* of 1970-1980.

for each turning of his life, according to Dallek, but he has also relied heavily on the ideas of other people, individually and collectively—which seems to be at odds with his obsessive touting of personal freedom and individual initiative. Dallek writes, “For all Reagan’s celebration of traditional American virtues, however powerful his impulse to reverse the modern currents which he sees undermining freedom and turning people into semiautomatons, he himself remains the consummate expression of the organization man, the other-directed personality who lacks genuine autonomy.” Dallek quotes John P. Sears, Reagan’s former campaign manager: Reagan “seldom came up with an original idea” and “waited for others to advise him what to do.”



WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR Reagan’s idealization of self-reliance, of self-mastery? Why does he hate dependency? Dallek finds the explanation in Reagan’s childhood and young manhood. There are his vivid memories, from a very early age, of a horse-drawn fire engine racing down the street, of giving a penny to a soldier, of rescuing some birds that had spilled from their nest. Reagan also recalls the joy of watching silent films of cowboys foiling robbers and rescuing beautiful girls. From such experiences, Dallek writes, Reagan concluded that “it was better to be the rescuer than the rescued.”

As a young man, he discovered another facet of the rescuer-rescuee relationship. According to his autobiography, *Where’s the Rest of Me?*, which Dallek takes at face value, Reagan saved seventy-seven people from drowning

during the summers he worked as a life-guard. “They felt insulted,” Reagan wrote. “Almost every one of them later sought me out and angrily denounced me for dragging them to shore.” From this, Reagan concluded “that people hate to be saved.”

But by far the most influential experiences in Reagan’s early life, says Dallek, were ones having to do with his father, who had what the people of Dixon called “a powerful thirst.” He was an alcoholic, dependent on booze. In his autobiography, Reagan told of the first time, in his boyhood, that he saw his father sprawled on the front porch, drunk. “I felt myself fill with grief for my father at the same time I was feeling sorry for myself,” he recalled. “Seeing his arms spread out as if he were crucified—as in-

deed he was—his hair soaked with melting snow, snoring as he breathed, I could feel no resentment against him.”

Quoting this, Dallek adds,

The episode must have reinforced Reagan’s horror of being in a helpless condition, beholden to someone else for survival. Further, it probably encouraged him to see all human relations in extremes—one is either entirely dependent or fully free. . . . Reagan lived in fear of his father’s uncontrolled behavior and understandably places an exaggerated premium on self-mastery in his own life and in the life of the nation.

Apparently, Reagan was also left with the desire to forget that his father ever existed; when pressed, he remembers him as no more than a cameo actor in his morality tales. In his biography of Reagan, Lou Cannon wrote, “When I first

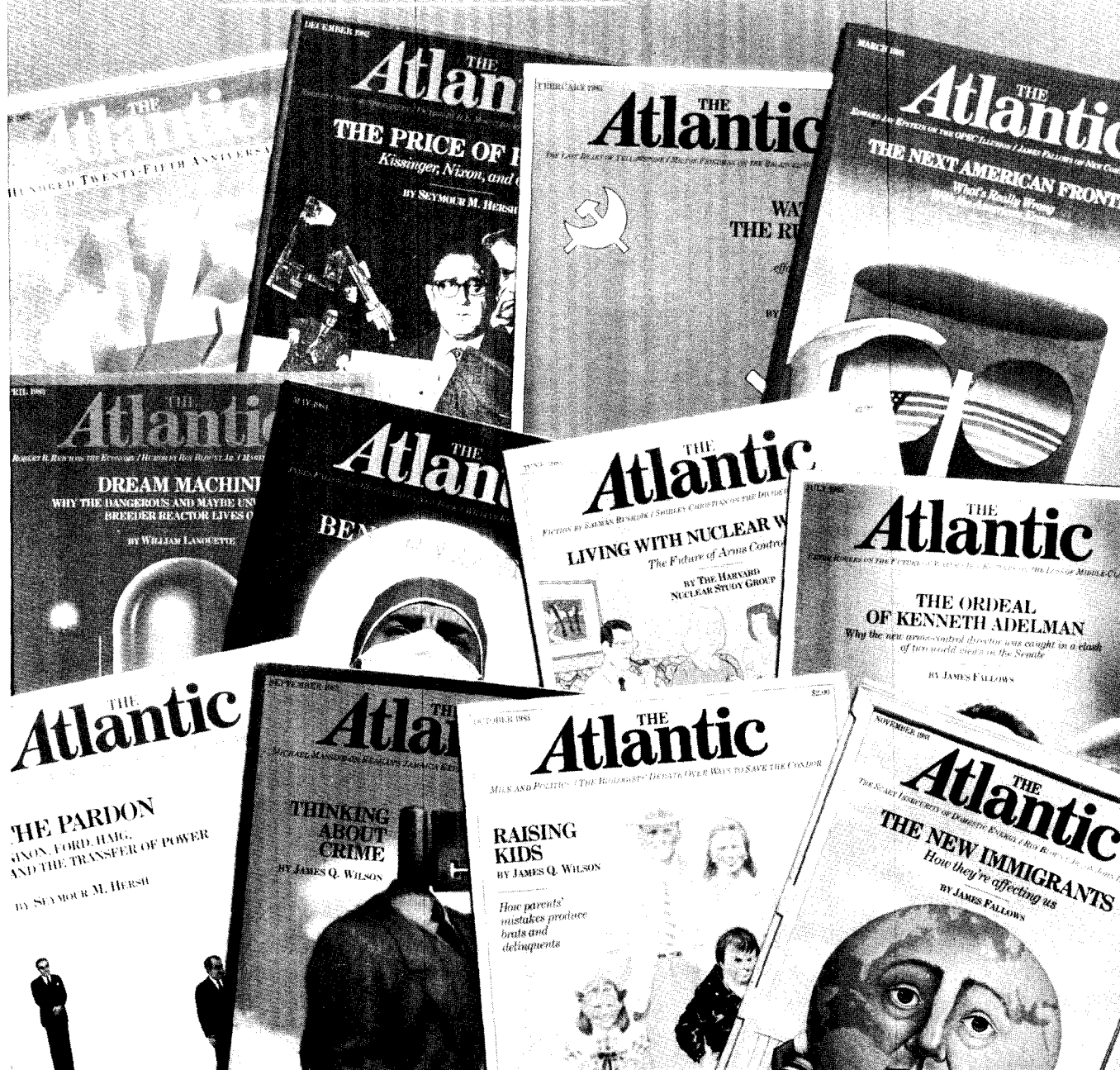
asked Reagan some fifteen years ago about his family, he talked nonstop about his mother for several minutes without even mentioning his father.”

Has the memory of his alcoholic father affected Reagan’s politics? Dallek gives several examples of how he thinks it has. For one thing, it made Reagan admire Franklin Roosevelt. FDR’s New Deal may not have made Father Reagan a teetotaler, but it did give him a job—lifted him from his economically prone position on the front porch, so to speak—just as he hit bottom, having been fired as a traveling salesman. FDR was the fireman to the rescue, the cowboy to the rescue, that young Reagan grew up wanting to be. He saw in Roosevelt—and still sees—the heroic father he yearned for. “The accomplished, courageous man who overcame a crippling personal dependency and helped the nation reclaim its self-regard,” Dallek writes, “is the father Reagan never had.”

When Reagan failed to achieve his goals as governor of California, the specter of his father again floated by. He had wanted to lower taxes, cut the budget, and reduce the size of the government—and all three increased during his administration. For this, he took no responsibility, but blamed the failures on his predecessor, Governor Pat Brown. “In all this,” writes Dallek, “there are echoes of his alcoholic father, who, like most people unable to control their impulses, denied or refused to confront his overt behavior. Like the father he largely rejected but understandably could not detach himself from, Reagan plays fast and loose with the facts.” Indeed, he does this not simply in the way every cynical politician does it but in such a way as to suggest hallucination. For example, during the 1980 presidential campaign, according to a book by Evans and Novak that Dallek cites, Reagan “vociferously denied . . . that he sought the 1968 nomination”—which, of course, he had done.

The theory that Reagan lives in a dream world—a world of pretense, a world in which desires are confused with reality—is not new with Dallek. It may not have been new with Lou Cannon, who is a reporter for the *Washington Post*, either, but Cannon was certainly one of the first to describe the mind-set of Ronald Reagan in a way that could have come right out of a psychiatry textbook. “The heroic world of make-believe,” Cannon wrote, “and the real world coalesced [for Reagan]. The man

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who lived in both of them could not always distinguish one from the other, and he came to believe in many things that weren't true."

Dallek picks up this theme. In describing Reagan as governor, he uses phrases such as "false face" and "play acting." He writes of Reagan's "twisting of reality and perception," of Reagan's "tortured logic and distortion," of his "dissembling." In writing of Reagan as both governor and President, Dallek accuses him of denying reality or of being seriously out of touch with it.

PUT CANNON'S AND Dallek's views together, and we have a Ronald Reagan with a real psychological problem. As long as Reagan was merely a Hollywood actor, or a cheerleader for General Electric, or even the governor of the most populous state in the union, his mental condition was of no great concern to the nation. If it was a bit spotty, he could be considered just one of the crowd. As James David Barber wrote, "All of us are more or less neurotic, damned, healthy, saved, debased, and great." But a President is different, or at least is expected to be different, Barber argued. Because of a President's singular responsibility to help people make sense of politics, Barber went on to say, "If there is such a thing as extraordinary sanity, it is needed nowhere so much as in the White House."

Dallek portrays Reagan as falling ominously short of meeting that need. Reagan's quirks of mind and spirit are evident, he believes, in a use of politics for the wrong reason: to "release psychic tensions." Dallek sees Reagan as less interested in helping the country than in helping himself through the political experience. "For Reagan," he writes, "politics is a device for dealing with personal tensions that have plagued him since childhood. This may be fine for him, but it is hardly a reasonable way for a nation to wrestle with profound problems."

The central effort in this therapy is the creation of a world of symbols, Dallek says. The actions Reagan has taken have been aimed less at rearranging reality—though he would be happy to do that, too—than at re-creating the world that Reagan remembers from his childhood: a world in which a hard-working, God-fearing, family-oriented "white middle class . . . would once again stand symbolically at the center of American

life," free of an oppressive government that spends taxes on needy minorities.

It hardly matters to Reagan that his economic program is a bust; it was never meant to be anything but symbolic politics. Reaganomics has "done serious injury to domestic social programs and . . . caused significant suffering for the poor," Dallek says, but Reagan "denies these realities" and measures the "cuts in social programs not in terms of the people affected but as symbolic victories" over government in behalf of the middle class. The selfishness of Reaganomics is obvious, Dallek says, but Reagan's "insensitivity to the suffering of the poor has less to do with enriching himself or other wealthy Americans than it has to do with his antipathy to their dependence and their failure to achieve the self-reliance he gained for himself. The needy remind him of his dependent father, from whom he has tried to separate himself all his life." Pushed to the ultimate, this would mean, I suppose, that if Reagan starved the needy out of existence, he would be free of the irritating reminder they provide.

A similar obsession grips Reagan in foreign affairs. When he crusades against Russia,

it is a symbolic protest against the state of his own nation. . . . For Ronald Reagan, the world outside the United States is little more than an extension of the world within: the struggle to defend freedom and morality abroad is a more intense version of the battle to preserve these virtues at home. . . . the communism of the Soviet Union represents the end point, the logical culmination of dangerous currents—big government, atheism, and relaxed moral standards—that [he sees] running so powerfully in America.

WHAT IS WRONG with Dallek's theory that Reagan's childhood has shaped the present Administration? Perhaps nothing. In any event, it's not the kind of theory that can be proved wrong.

But several things about it make me uneasy. For one thing, Dallek makes too much of Reagan's rather commonplace memories. Dallek admits that "these memories are not remarkable"; he insists, however, that they are significant, because Reagan "himself makes so much of them." But does he really? Has he ever used them except in response to the exigencies of his political biographies

and speeches? The fact that Reagan has been talking about good old Dixon, Illinois, and moaning about poor old Dad for a quarter-century does not necessarily mean that these memories lie at the center of his soul; repetition is the style of all politicians. As Lou Cannon pointed out, Reagan has been giving essentially the same speech ever since he entered politics. And if he occasionally supplements some of its passages with a watery eye, that may be only a sign of the actor—not to mention the Irish—in him. A reading of Cannon's biography shows that Reagan gets blubbery rather easily.

I'm also bothered by Dallek's interpretation of Reagan's experience as a lifeguard. Even if, as Reagan claims, nearly all the seventy-seven people he rescued "felt insulted"—which I heartily doubt—it is pushing hard at the outer limits of credibility to conclude that "their response confirmed his [Reagan's] conviction that any kind of dependency or loss of self-possession leaves people feeling angry, demoralized, and foolish."

We are supposed to believe that Reagan had reached that conclusion by the end of his stint as a summer lifeguard, in 1932. It seems a singularly inappropriate year in which to get the impression that people in need of help do not like to be helped. Millions were out of work. They were overjoyed to receive assistance from Roosevelt's New Deal, which began the next year. Reagan's father was only too happy to get a small bureaucratic job with the New Deal welfare system. I've never heard that the millions who were helped by the New Deal were "insulted" by it, or expressed anything but the deepest gratitude for the rescue. Don't these millions of grateful citizens weigh more heavily in Reagan's memory than the seventy-seven water-soaked vacationers he alleges that he towed to safety? Of course they do. Asked by Cannon to name the most important influence in his life, Reagan immediately responded, "The Depression." In speeches, interviews, and his own writings, Reagan has made plain that the admiration he felt for the New Deal and for Roosevelt shaped his social and political motivations for the first twenty years of his adult life.

This brings us to the most puzzling feature of Reagan's development. Why the remarkable change in his thinking? Why did Reagan, who admits to having been "a very emotional New Dealer" in

the 1930s and 1940s, decide by 1980 (and probably much before then) that, as Dallek paraphrases, "fascism was the inspiration of the New Deal"? How did the Reagan who in 1948 denounced "the banner carrier[s] for Wall Street" and campaigned for Hubert Humphrey and Harry Truman become the Reagan of 1981 who replaced the portrait of Harry Truman in the Cabinet Room with one of Calvin Coolidge?

Dallek's explanation is, I think, thin. While he does acknowledge that Reagan's role as a traveling spokesman for GE in the 1950s and the new wealth that came to him from the job made it easier for him to switch ideologies, Dallek asserts that Reagan's principal reason for turning against the New Deal and its legacies was that by the 1950s it had spawned a big government that was snuffing out personal freedoms. Here, Dallek says, Reagan saw a nation in distress, and the situation appealed to his "inner affinity for rescuing others from dependence and defeat." He saw his chance to imitate those movie cowboys who had ridden across the silent screens of Dixon long ago.

Maybe that was one reason for his change. But I liked Ronnie Dugger's and Lou Cannon's explanations better. Dugger blamed Nancy Reagan, mostly. Reagan was still very much a liberal Democrat, if a somewhat wary one after his encounters with Hollywood Communists, when, in 1952, he married Nancy, the stepdaughter of a wealthy, intolerant neurosurgeon—Dugger called her "the strongminded, prudish, conservative beauty." Her influence, said Dugger, led the "amiable, love-happy" Reagan to acquire a new vision of the world. Two years after his marriage, he began his eight-year stint as a propagandist and showman for GE, making as many as fourteen speeches a day to GE employees, service clubs, professional clubs, and business organizations. Naturally, since GE paid for most of them, the speeches reflected the philosophy of the corporation's top brass—anti-government, anti-labor, anti-taxes, pro-business.

Those speeches and the question-and-answer sessions that followed them, Cannon claimed, account for the transformation from liberal to reactionary. Sure, said Cannon, Nancy is the most influential person in Reagan's life, but "Nancy did not convert her husband to conservatism." He was converted by a kind of self-hypnosis. Many of Reagan's

audiences were the fat-cat variety, "and the questions thrown at him often focused on inflation or government regulation," Cannon wrote. "In the process of answering these questions in a manner pleasing to the questioners, Reagan became a defender of corporations and a critic of the government that the corporate leaders thought was strangling them. The process was gradual, but pervasive. Reagan believes in what he says, and he wound up believing what he was saying." Maybe he did start out just playing a role for GE, but he wound up living it. "More than anything," wrote Cannon, "it is his GE experience that changed Reagan from an adversary of big business into one of its most ardent spokesmen."

Of course, for the many millions of Americans who are suffering from or frightened by the Reagan Administration, it hardly matters except as a point of curiosity whether Reagan is responding to some childhood psychic hangover or to henpecking or to a contrived role that he played too long. For these Americans, the end result is what counts. Whatever they might think of Dallek's theory that Reagan shapes his policies for personal therapy, in response to "inner personal grievances" and to make himself "feel better," they would doubtless agree with Dallek's final appraisal of Reagan's symbolic politics:

Despite the fact that effective presidents have been more the exception than the rule in our history, it is difficult to believe that a nation of 226 million people cannot find a more rational, thoughtful, and energetic leader with greater self-awareness and a better grip on national and international realities. □

SHORT REVIEWS



ANY FOUR WOMEN COULD ROB THE BANK OF ITALY by Ann Cornelisen. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, \$15.95. Ms. Cornelisen, who has written of Italy and Italians with sober sympathy and understanding, has turned her efforts to fiction. Her witty, satiric novel centers on the Anglo-American colony infesting a small Tuscan town. One of these expatri-

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"Computers: Behavior Modification," by James Fallows, tells you how to customize your WordStar to suit your own tastes—not the programmer's—and to eliminate many hidden delays built into the program. The article gives clear, careful instruction for re-installing the program and changing the editing and printing defaults. It's part of *The Atlantic's* continuing coverage of computers and computer users.

"Computers: Behavior Modification" originally appeared in *The Atlantic's* January, 1984 issue. To obtain a reprint, send \$3 to: *The Atlantic*, Dept. CRM, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, MA 02116. We'll send you a reprint.

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FINAL REPORTS

With a foreword by
Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.

DOUBLEDAY

Also available from The Atlantic Bookstore, page 133

ates, an American author bedeviled by illiterate editors, remarks to her friend, an American television director nerve-racked by temperamental cameramen, that any four women could rob the Bank of Italy, because the Italian police assume that women are incapable of any crime but those of passion. Inspired by sexual exasperation and a long motor trip, the two give serious thought to the proposition, and eventually bring off an admirably neat heist. Then their troubles set in. There are, in all, five women involved in the caper, each encumbered with attentive males, each part of the same gossipy, hard-drinking social circuit, and each holding her own notion of what should be done with the loot. The complications the author devises from this situation are convoluted, growing steadily more hilarious and less predictable until they arrive at a conclusion worthy of W. S. Gilbert in its preposterous logic. The drop of feminist bitters in Ms. Cornelisen's champagne merely increases its sparkle.

A HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY by José Donoso. Knopf, \$16.95. Torture, homosexuality, rape, incest, cannibalism, and phony bookkeeping flourish with baroque luxuriance in Mr. Donoso's latest novel. Readers thoroughly familiar with the history of Chile can, no doubt, translate his fantastic inventions into actual events and people. Readers less well informed may find the tale a trifle lengthy for its purpose, which is to convey the author's opinion that the government of Chile always was, now is, and presumably will continue to be a wretched mess.

ONE WRITER'S BEGINNINGS by Eudora Welty. Harvard University Press, \$10.00. When Eudora Welty delivered the Massey Lectures in the History of American Civilization, at Harvard, she chose to speak about the elements in her childhood that, in her opinion, influenced the subject matter and construction of her fiction. The result is an affectionate, vivid reminiscence of life in Jackson, Mississippi, where she was born in 1909, and of visits to contrasting family outposts in West Virginia (music and light-hearted chatter) and Ohio (taciturnity and work). The author does not claim that the piecing together of disparate observations into a pattern is what makes a fiction writer, nor does she offer advice to aspiring novelists. She simply de-

scribes what underlies her own work, and in the process creates a fine piece of Americana.

PRO & CON by Walter Isaacson. Putnam's, \$18.95. Mr. Isaacson has discovered, via Protagoras, that "there are two sides to every question." He has therefore selected what he considers the major unsettled questions of our day and summarized the arguments on either side of each, reinforcing their points with statistics (if available) and quotations from authorities (often self-appointed). The topics proceed from Abortion to Voluntary Euthanasia, encompassing along the way the Designated Hitter Rule, Old Movies, and Returnable Bottles. Since Mr. Isaacson has been meticulously fair in collecting the best arguments offered on either side of every case, including Flat Earth, his book is not likely to change any reader's settled opinion about Gambling or One-Term Presidency, but it provides enough information to keep cocktail-party debaters in full cry for hours. Perhaps significantly, Noise Pollution is not on Mr. Isaacson's index.

UNTO THIS HOUR by Tom Wicker. Viking, \$19.95. Lucid description of battlefield action may be a minor art, but the author who focuses a novel on a battle should be master of it. Mr. Wicker is far from a master, and his subject (Second Bull Run or Second Manassas, depending on whether one's sympathy turns North or South) was a three-day struggle sprawled across better than a hundred square miles of diverse countryside. Even with maps, the action escapes Mr. Wicker's control and the reader's comprehension. The characters, however, require little effort of understanding. Most of them have, in various uniforms, marched through war novels for years.

THE KING'S WAY by Françoise Chandernagor. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$15.95. This novel purports to be the memoirs of Françoise d'Aubigné, daughter of a well-connected black sheep, widow of the subversive poet Scarron, governess to a bevy of royal bastards, and, ultimately, as the Marquise de Maintenon, the morganatic wife of Louis XIV. She was undoubtedly a remarkable woman, admired in her day as a wit, a scholar, and a beauty. Ms. Chandernagor has not done very well in recreating her heroine's wit, although translation from

French to English may have weakened the effect of certain ripostes, but on the whole, the book is history the easy way, and it makes agreeable reading.

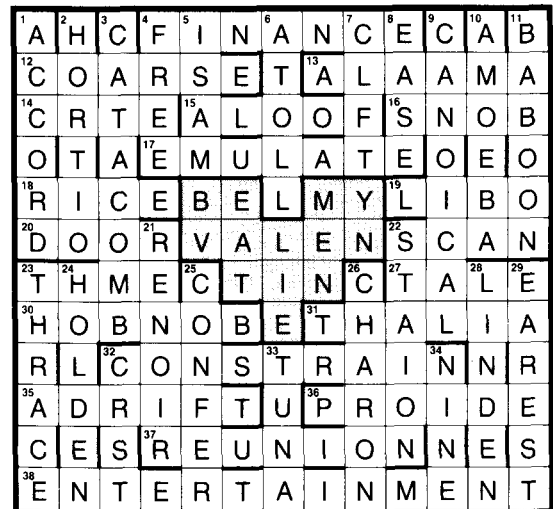
LEAVING THE LAND by Douglas Unger. Harper & Row, \$13.95. Mr. Unger's novel, set in the Dakotas, records the decline of a once-prosperous farming family reduced to what amounts to peonage by a combination of misguided federal policy and big-money agribusiness. The Hogans are plausible characters and the author has worked hard to make them interesting, but they remain imaginary, while the financial and legislative network that entraps their entire region is real and has its sinister counterparts in other rural areas. The background of the tale therefore becomes more important than the experience of any character, producing the impression that the author is aiming at the wrong target. This is a first novel, and although out of balance, it is intelligent and promising.

CÉZANNE WATERCOLORS by Götz Adriani. Abrams, \$65.00. The watercolors, lavishly reproduced in color, are, of course, beautiful. Mr. Adriani's text is genuinely informative in regard to Cézanne's attitudes, intentions, and techniques. It is also blessedly devoid of art critics' jargon.

THE CHRISTIANS AS THE ROMANS SAW THEM by Robert L. Wilken. Yale University Press, \$17.95. When Christianity finally achieved full control of the Roman state in the fifth century, ecclesiastical authorities caused the destruction of all anti-Christian writings. They did not bother to destroy the responses to such writings by earlier Christian propagandists. It is from the surviving pro-Christian documents that Professor Wilken has deduced the old Roman view of Christianity, which proves to have been neither static nor stupid. The new religion was seen initially as a combination of witless superstition and private burial society, and illegal on both counts. As it continued to spread, it was studied by intellectuals who attacked it on historical and philosophical grounds, raising questions that still gall theologians. Wilken's reconstruction of the pagan arguments should fascinate any reader with an interest in the history of human thought, for his anti-Christian scholars were formidably adroit in debate and demolition.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

Answers to the February Puzzler, "HEARTS"



Across. 4. FI(N)ANCE 12. COARSE (homophone) 13. A(LAB)-AMA 14. (con)CRETE 15. A-LOOF (fool rev.) 16. SNOB (anag.) 17. EMU-LATE 18. R-ICE 19. LIMBO (double def.) 20. DOOR (rev.) 22. SCAN(t) 23. THYME (homophone) 27. TALE (anag.) 30. HOB-NOB (homophone of knob) 31. TH(ALI)A (hat anag.) 32. CONS-TRAIN 35. AD-RIFT 36. PROV(ID)E 37. REUNION (anag.) 38. ENTER-TAIN(MEN)T Down. 1. AC(CO)RD (card anag.) 2. HO-RATIO (pun) 3. CAT-A-COMB (act anag.) 4. F(R)EE 5. I-SLAM 6. A-TOLL 7. C-LEFT 8. EASE (anag.) 9. CAN(ONIC)AL (coin anag.) 10. A-MOE-BA 11. BA(BOO)N 21. RE-NOIR (iron anag.) 22. STATION (anag.) 23. TH(RAC)E (car rev.) 24. H(OLD)EN 25. CON(I)FER 26. CHAR-ON 28. LIN(D)EN 29. EAR-NEST 32. C-REST 33. TUN-A (rev.) 34. N(IN)E

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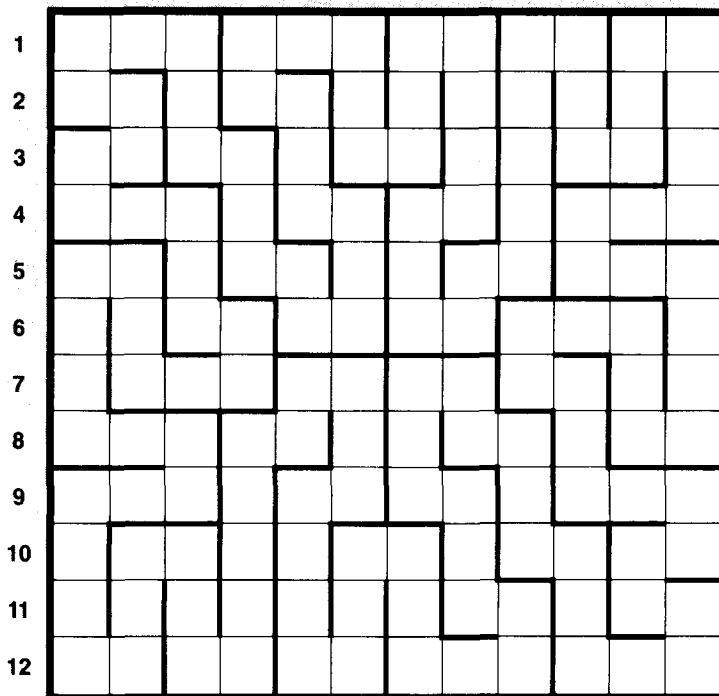
LABYRINTH

(Acknowledgments to Mike Shenk)

Each Across row in this puzzle contains two consecutive words totaling 12 letters, clued in order. In addition, 20 words wind themselves consecutively through the labyrinthine trail formed by the heavy bars. These words are clued in order (with clues lettered a-t for convenience), but exactly where the trail begins and in which direction it proceeds is left for solvers to determine.

Solvers will find, while entering these labyrinth words, certain single letters occurring between two consecutive labyrinth words (these extra letters being indicated only by the Across words). When the puzzle is completed, these eight letters will spell, from top to bottom and left to right as they appear in the diagram, the name of a character associated with labyrinths.

Answers include six proper nouns.



The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 133.

ACROSS

1. Greek character involved in small labyrinth problem? (8)
Listen to shrub evergreens (4)
2. Religious group keeps regarding mystery (6)
Suffering reversal embarrassed art dealer (6)
3. Attack and burn appliance company (6)
Try to sell bicycle to audience (6)
4. Weight of character straddling horse (7)
Run around a deck (5)
5. March advertisement is in trim (6)
Study on Kennedy is defaced (6)
6. Beat on peg in hole (7)
Heard of chamber in a cow's stomach (5)
7. Turkish sailors? (6)
Indian group has left fortress (6)

8. Set punk bands free to walk (6)
End of plume stuck in Bertram's headwear (6)
9. Small pawn causes alarm (5)
Sweet Sue died eating fish (7)
10. Mom mended a car's rattles (7)
Dope brought back into American state (5)
11. Produce lace in certain condition (7)
Drink black muck (5)
12. Again fixes injured steers (6)
A grain's yielding nuts (6)

LABYRINTH

- a. Labyrinths taking me around a zig-zag curve
- b. Explorer mentioned in Acrosses
- c. Articles about the extremes of remote space
- d. Bogey gives talk in Mass. college circles
- e. Vehicles carrying back marine leaders
- f. Loud evening dress with folds
- g. Wipes out a case tried wrongly
- h. Mistakenly arrest judges
- i. Photos of the best quality framing right fielder
- j. Spouse reflectively split punch
- k. Knife marks marred C. Heston
- l. Red Indian cooked a dinner
- m. Grand time for a pledge
- n. Model T tore around a turn
- o. Return to check channel with towers
- p. Terrible danger on a Caribbean island
- q. Crabby violinist?
- r. Communist eating pastry came back
- s. Honest letters exposing press intimately
- t. Summoned spice for ears

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.



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